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Greensmith et al.

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(54) **GOLF CLUB HEAD**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**

A63B 53/04	(2006.01)
A63B 49/06	(2006.01)
A63B 59/00	(2015.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC ***A63B 53/0466*** (2013.01); ***A63B 49/06*** (2013.01); *A63B 53/04* (2013.01); *A63B 2053/0408* (2013.01); *A63B 2053/0433* (2013.01); *A63B 2053/0437* (2013.01); *A63B 2053/0454* (2013.01); *A63B 2053/0458* (2013.01); *A63B 2059/0003* (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC A63B 2053/0437; A63B 53/04
USPC 473/349, 345, 348
See application file for complete search history.

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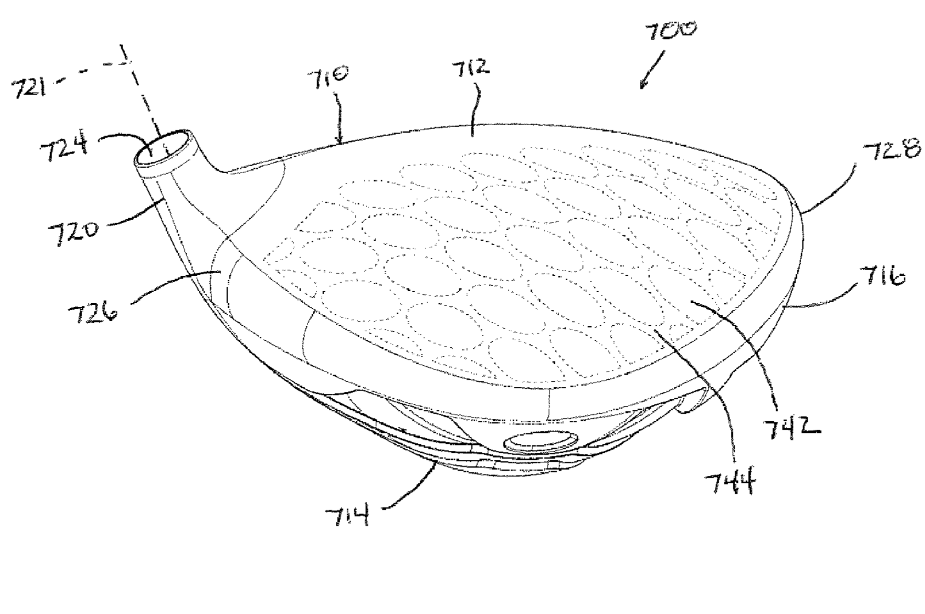
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Klarquist Sparkman, LLP

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A golf club head includes a body defining an interior cavity. The body includes a sole positioned at a bottom portion of the golf club head, a crown positioned at a top portion, and a skirt positioned around a periphery between the sole and crown. The body has a forward portion and a rearward portion. The club head includes a face positioned at the forward portion of the body. In some embodiments, the crown includes a lattice-like structure having thin regions surrounded by a web of relatively thicker regions. In some embodiments, the club head includes one or more stiffening tubes attached between the sole and the crown to improve the acoustic performance of the golf club head.

17 Claims, 17 Drawing Sheets



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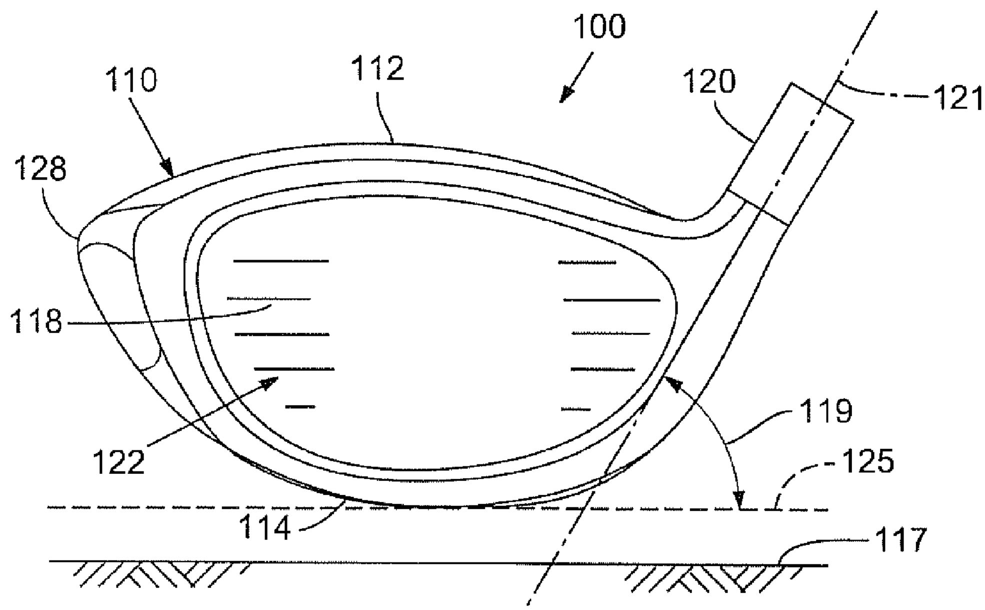
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FIG. 1

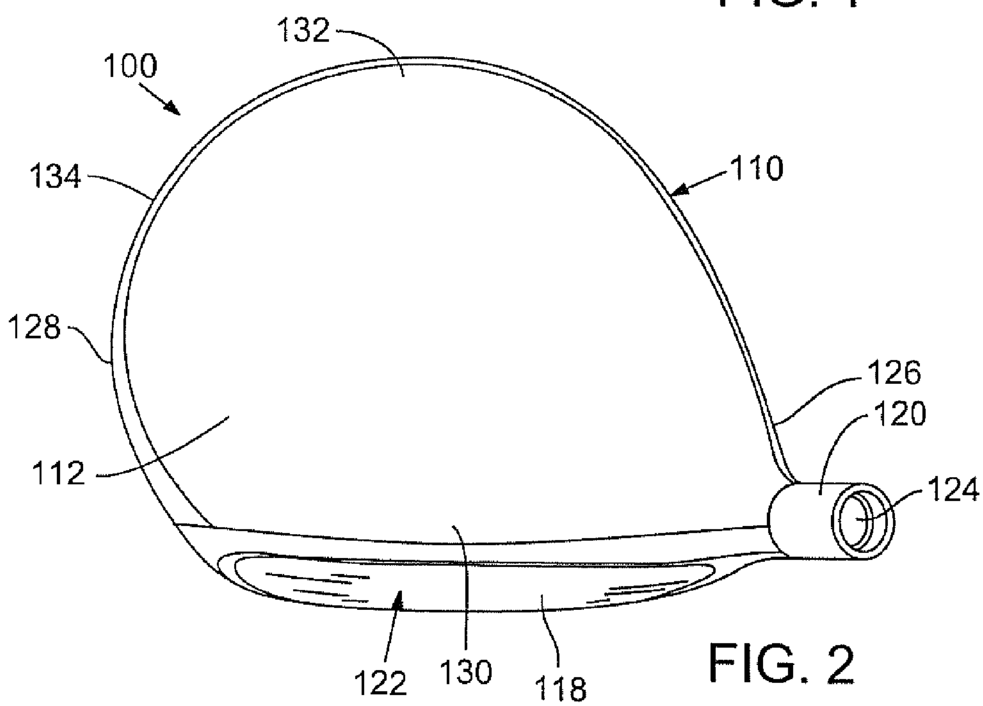
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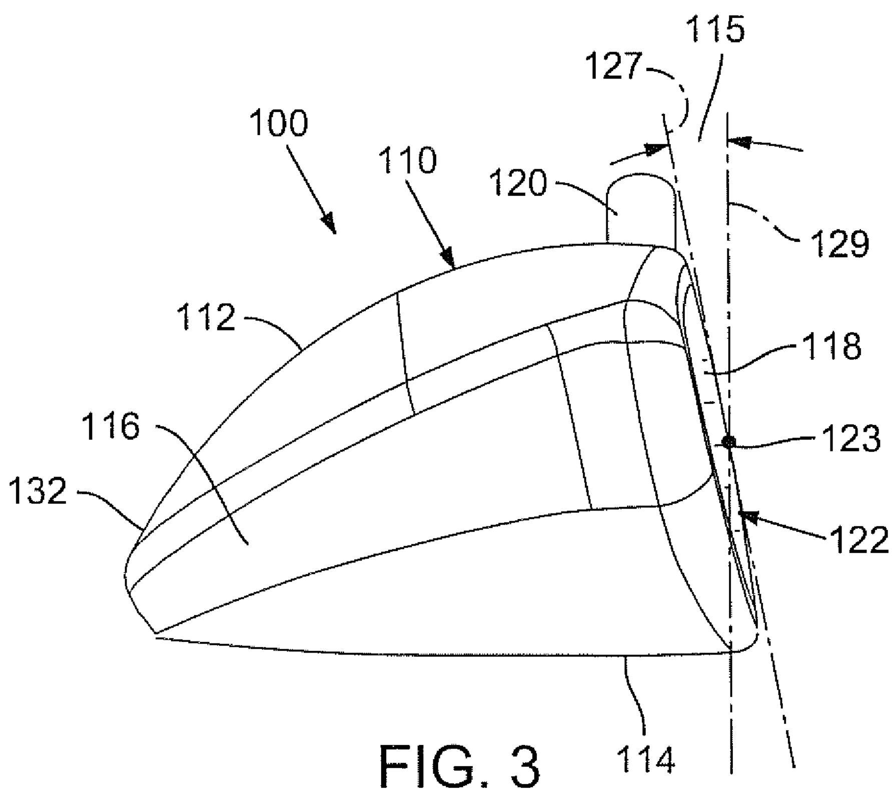
FIG. 2



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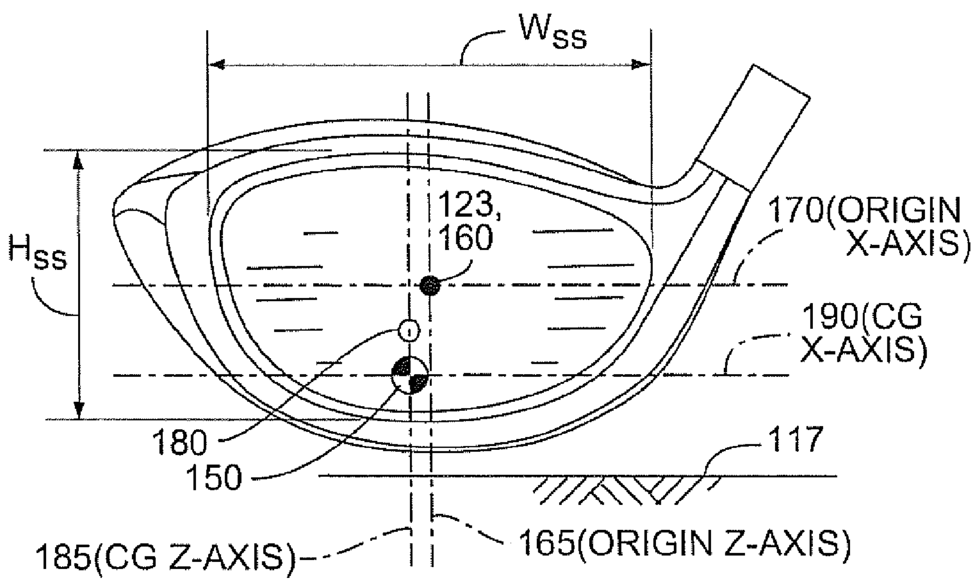

W_{SS}
H_{SS}
123,
160
170(ORIGIN
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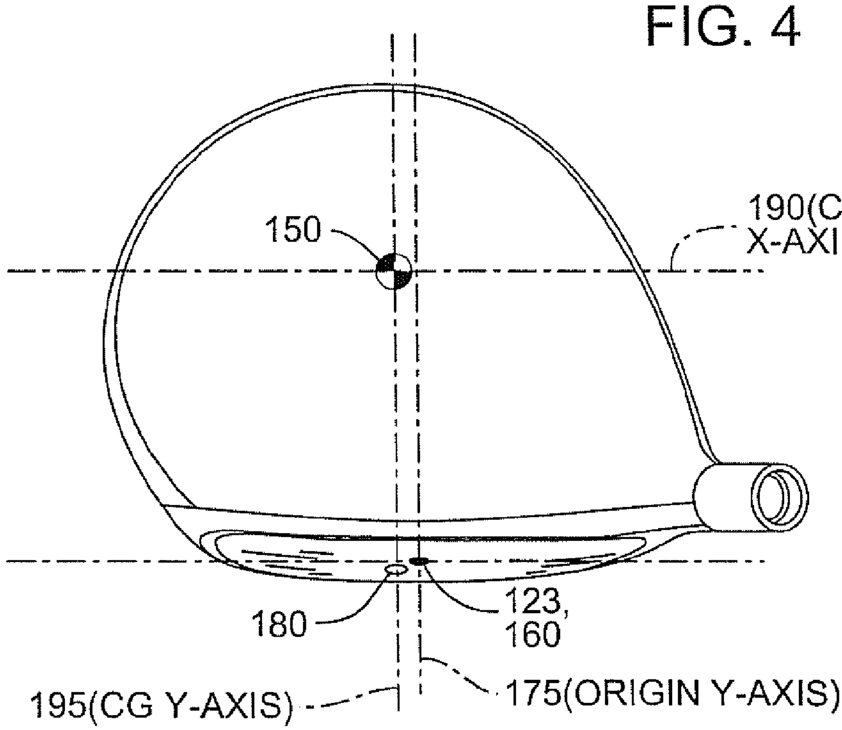
190(CG
X-AXIS)
180
150
117
185(CG Z-AXIS)
165(ORIGIN Z-AXIS)

FIG. 4



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175(ORIGIN Y-AXIS)

FIG. 5

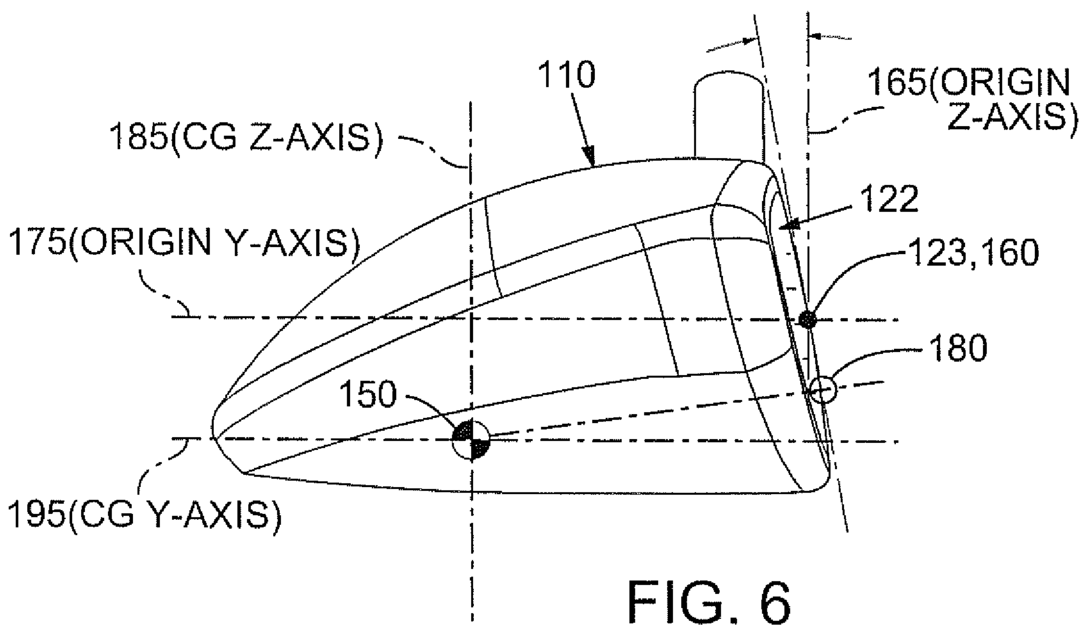

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FIG. 6

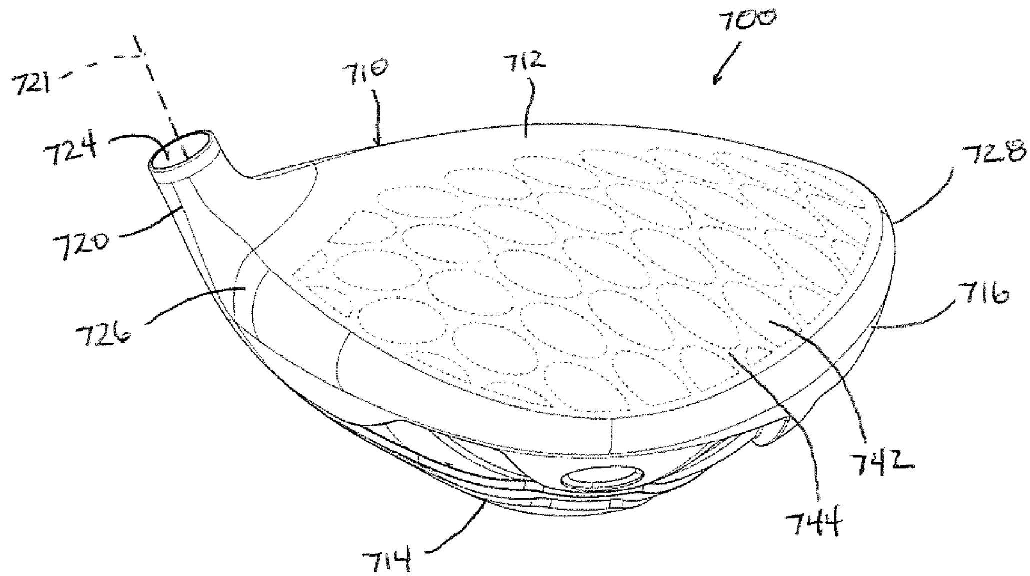
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FIG. 7A

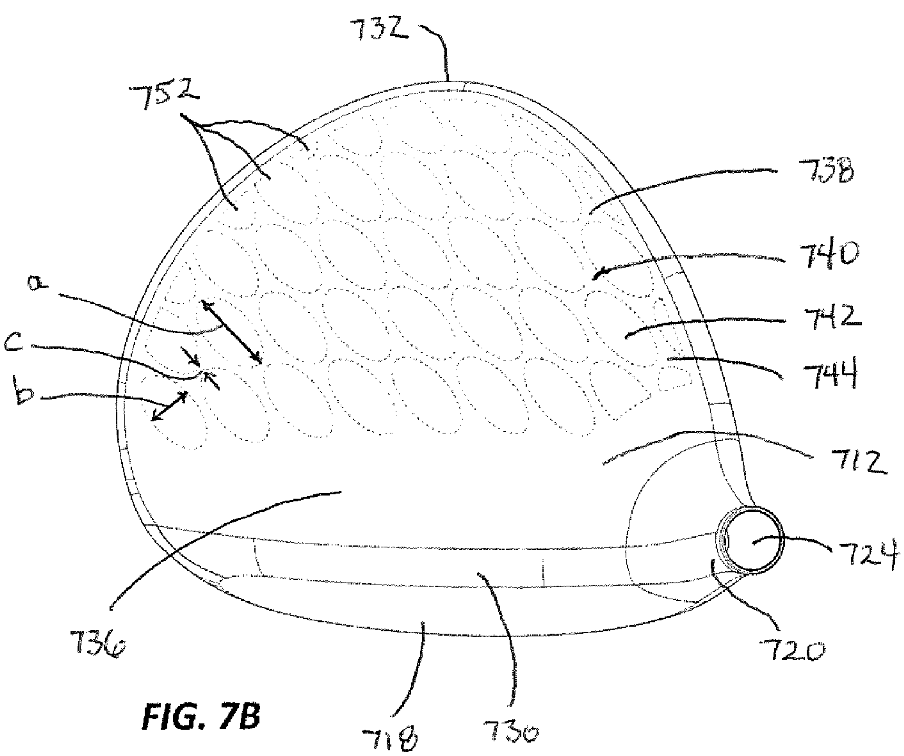
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FIG. 7B

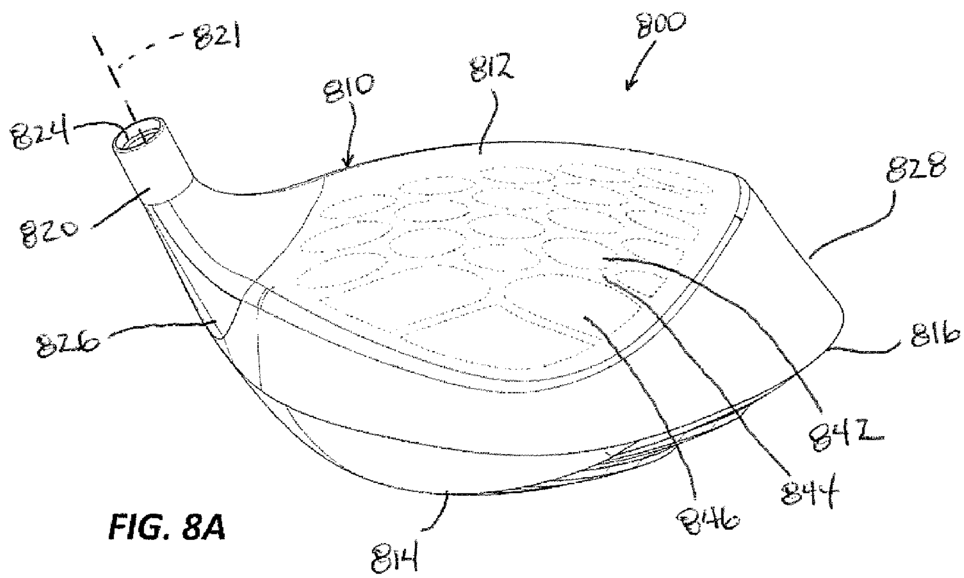
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FIG. 8A

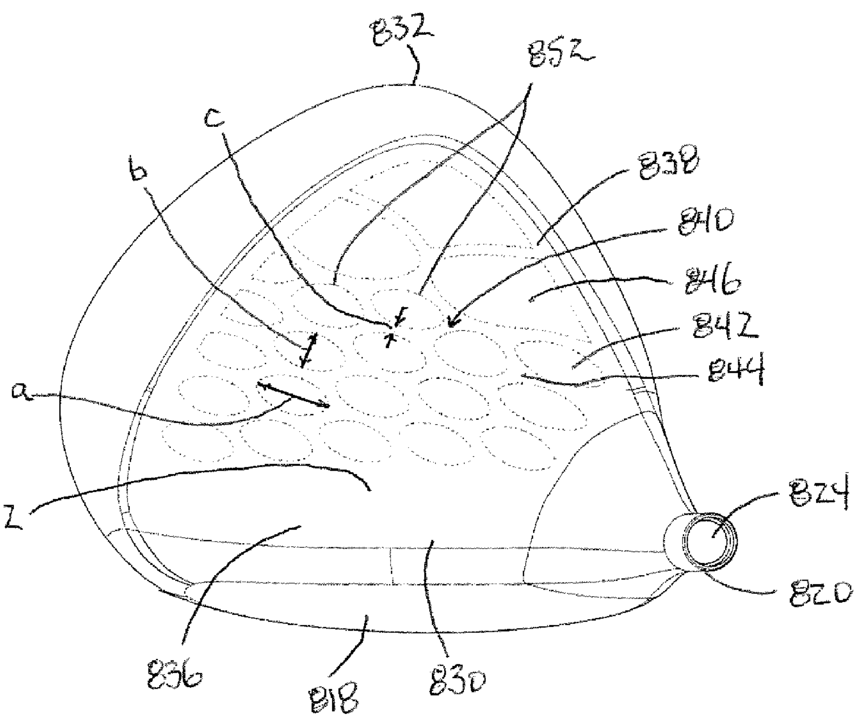
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FIG. 8B

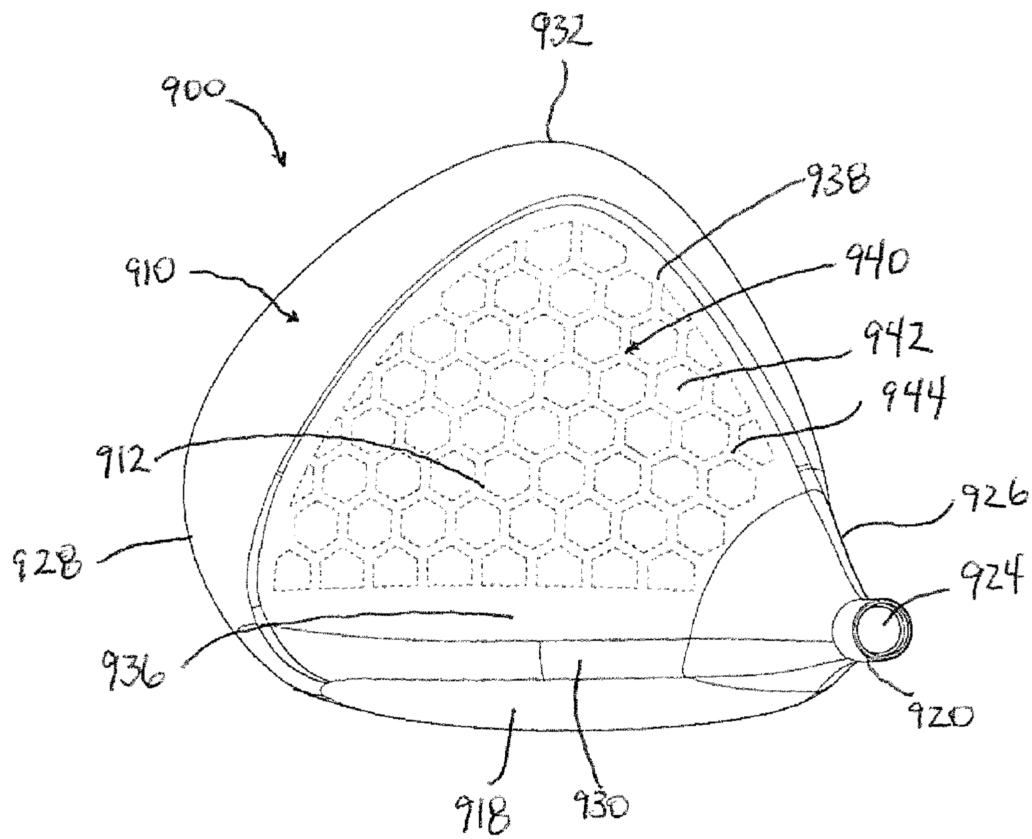
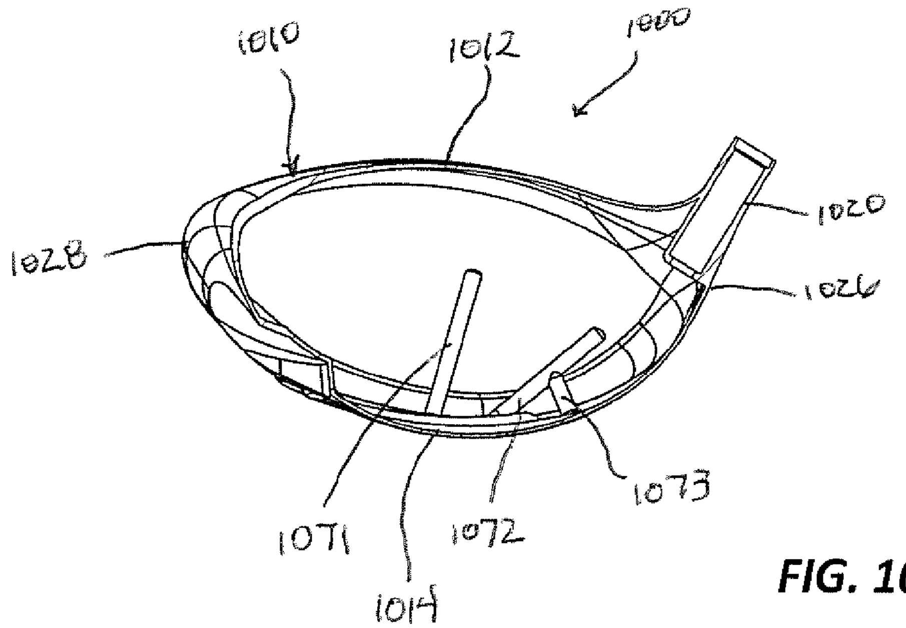


FIG. 9



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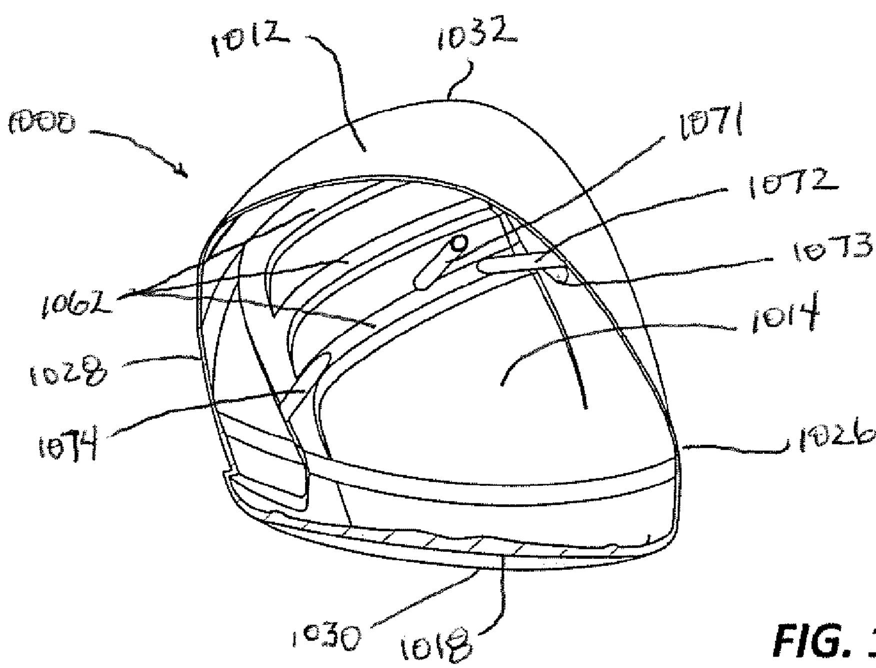

FIG. 10B

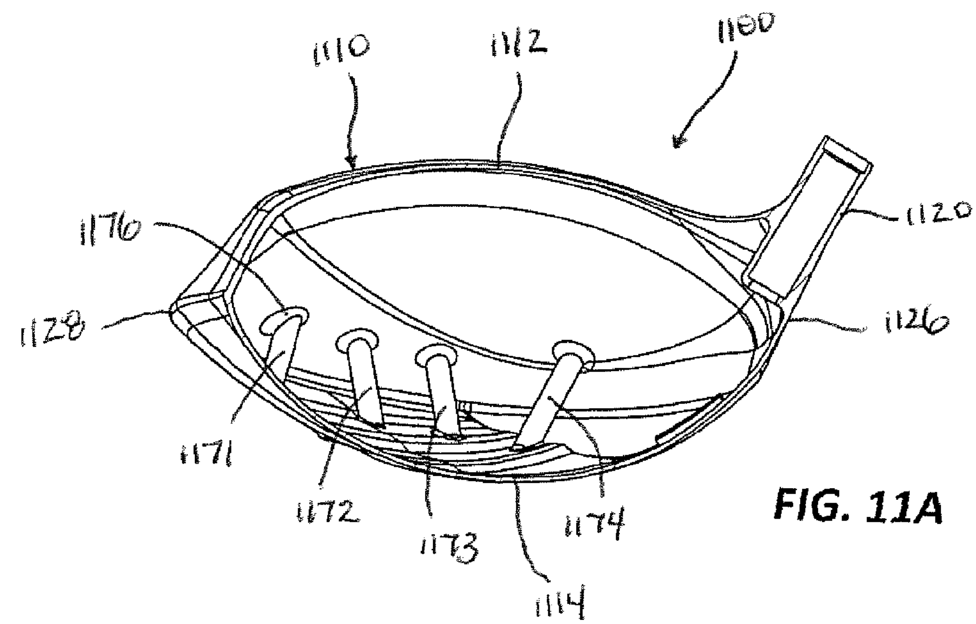

FIG. 11A

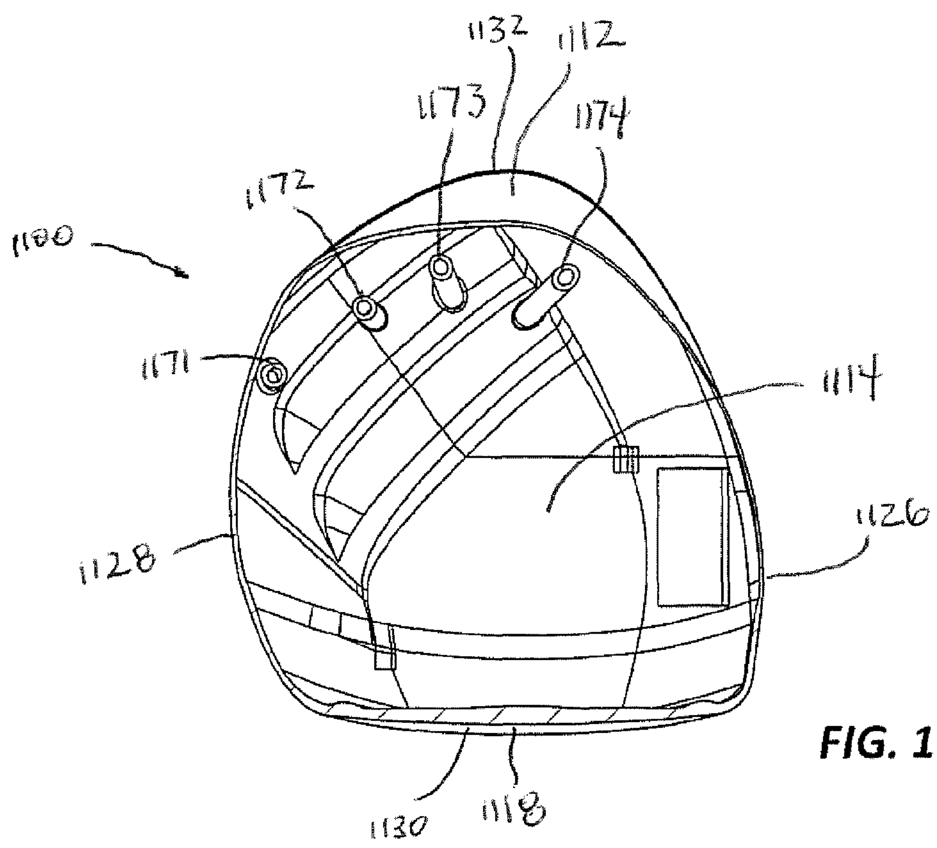

FIG. 11B

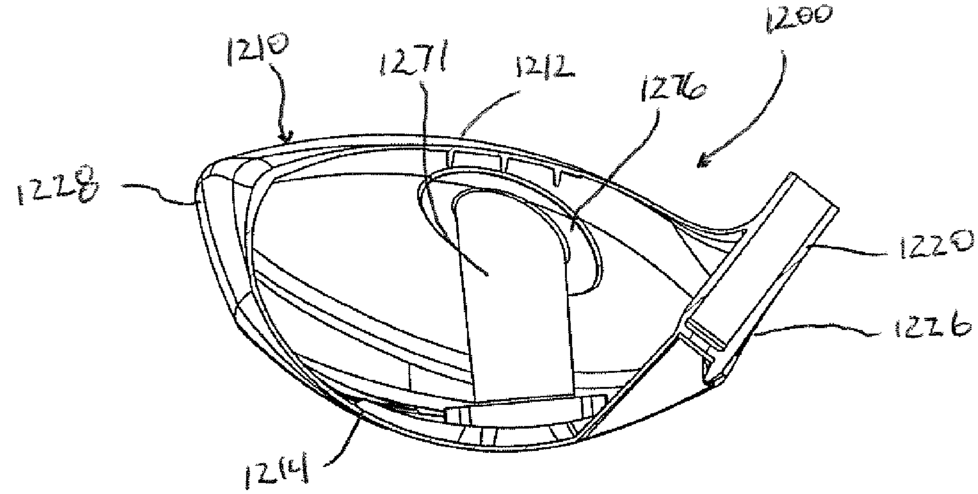

FIG. 12A

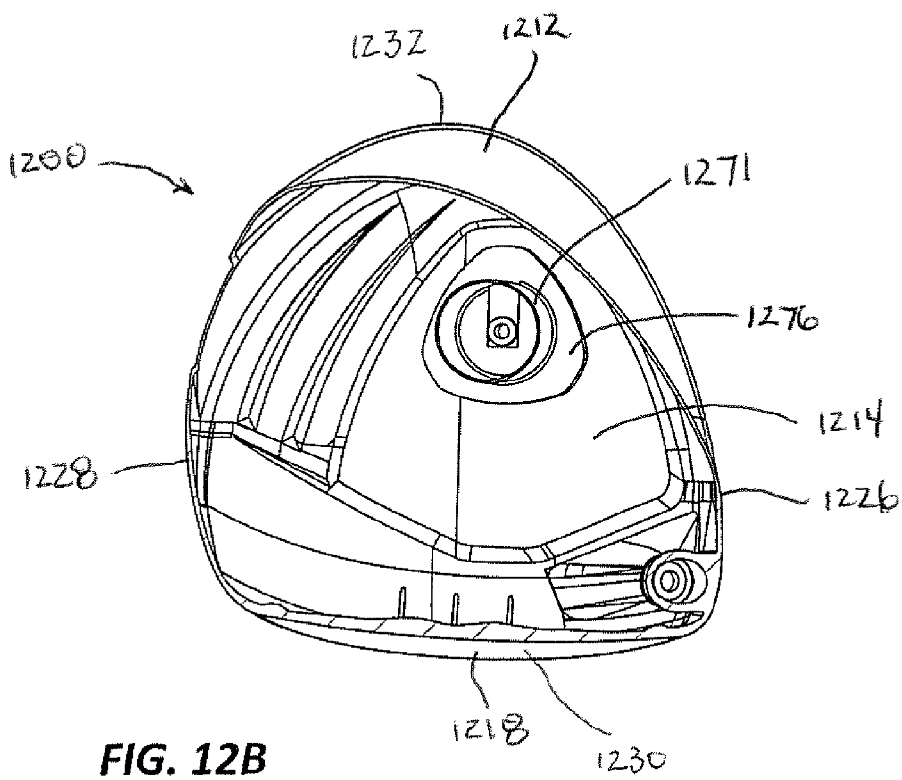

FIG. 12B

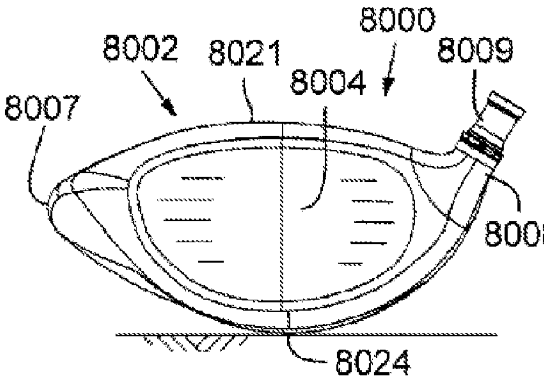

FIG. 13A

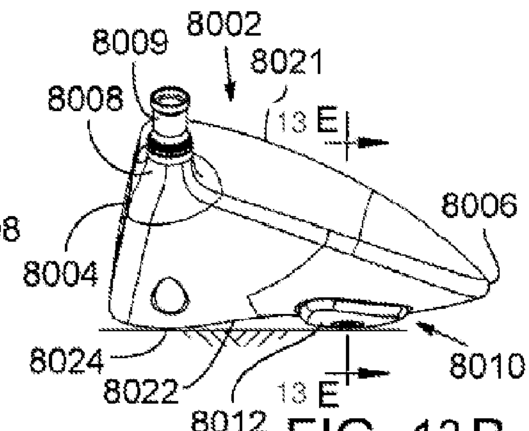

FIG. 13B

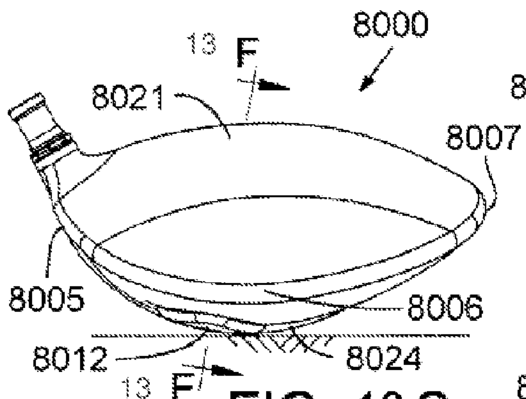

FIG. 13C

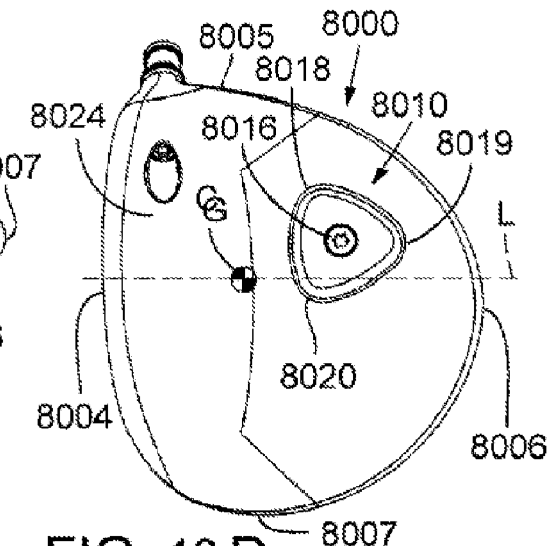

FIG. 13D

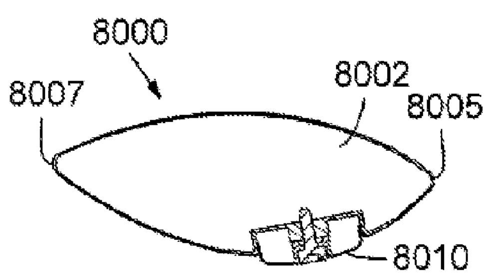

FIG. 13E

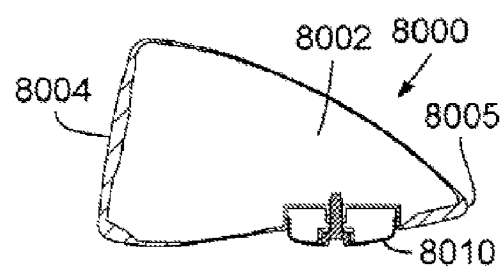

FIG. 13F

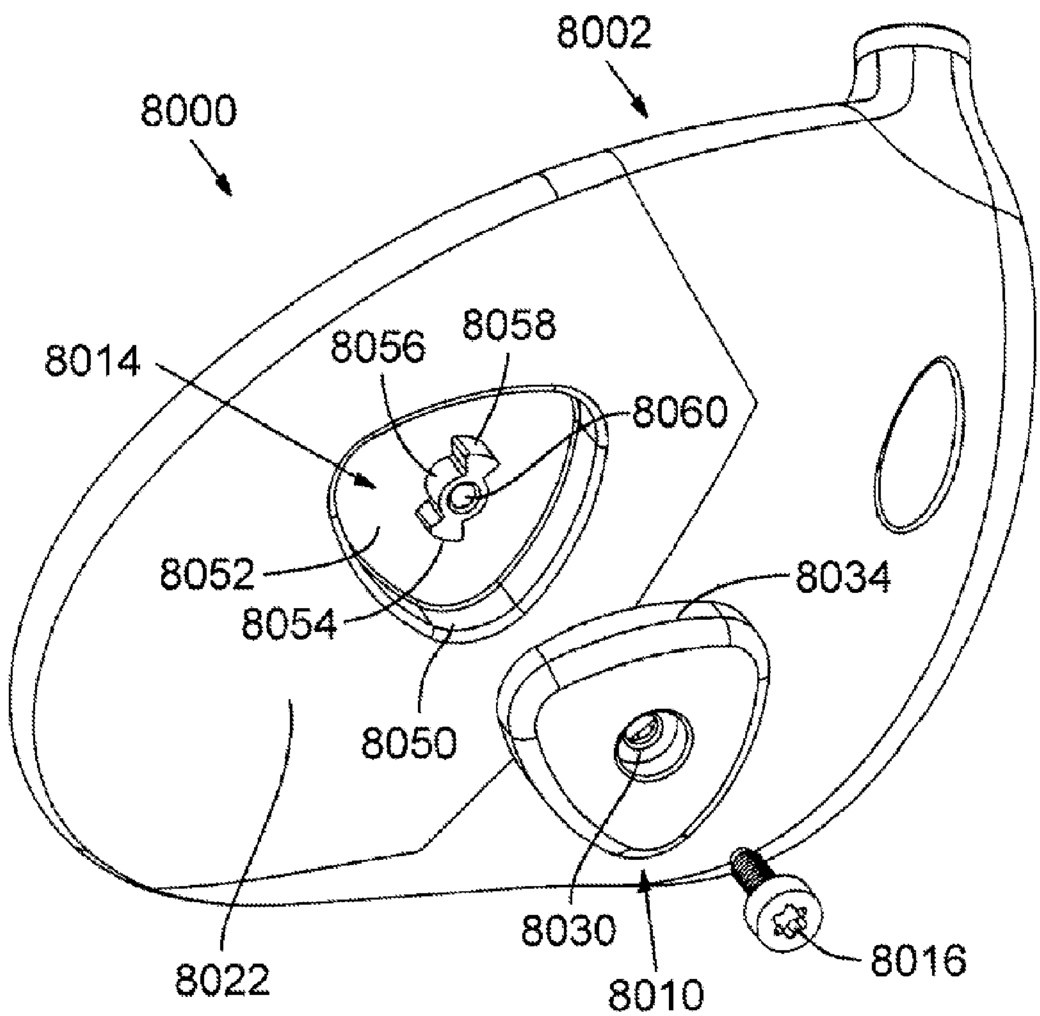
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FIG. 14

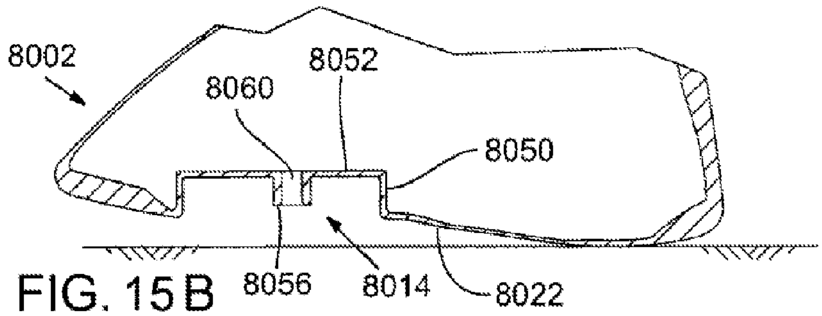


FIG. 15B

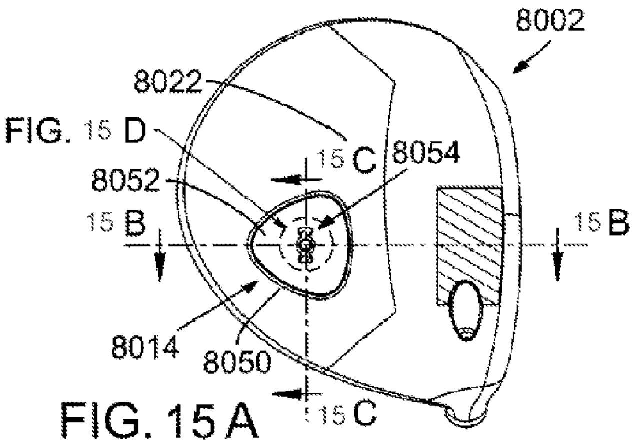


FIG. 15A

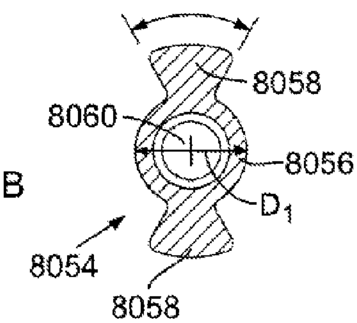


FIG. 15D

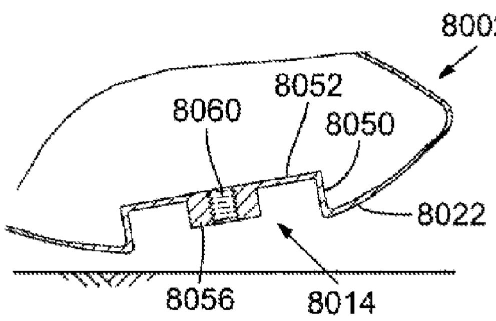
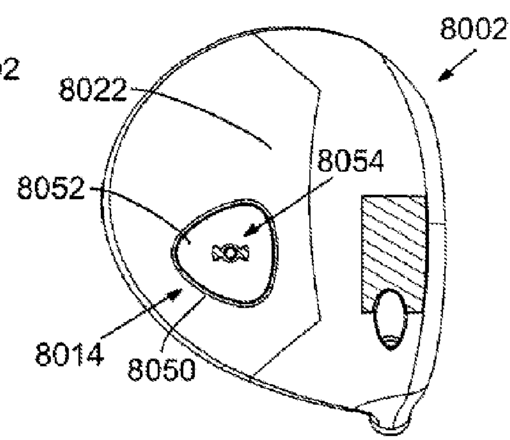


FIG. 15C



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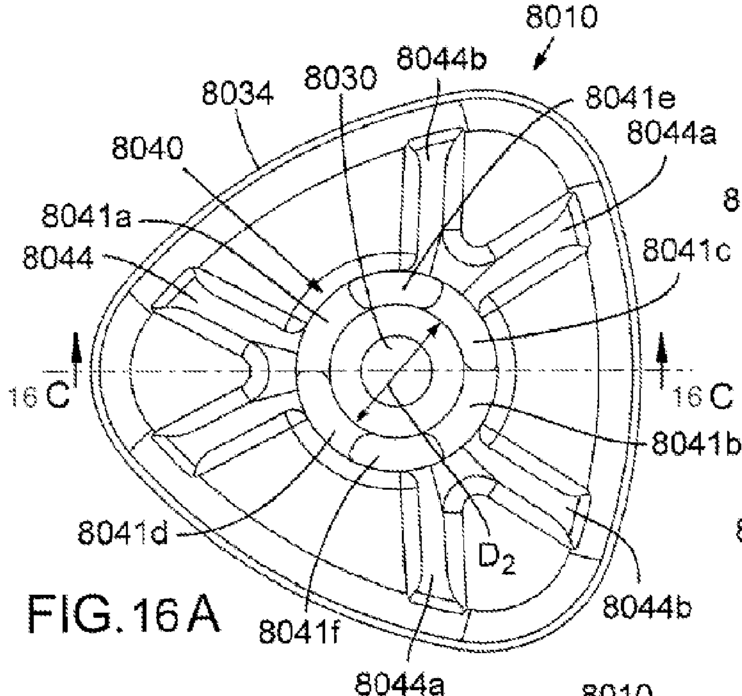
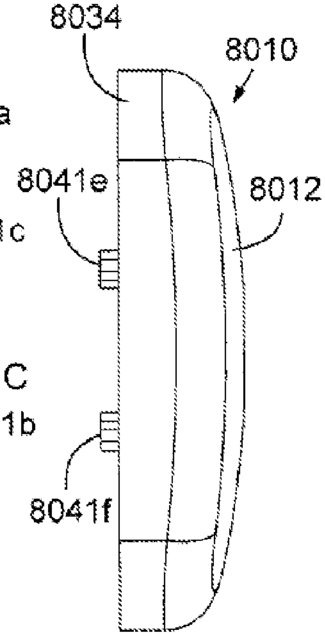


FIG. 16A



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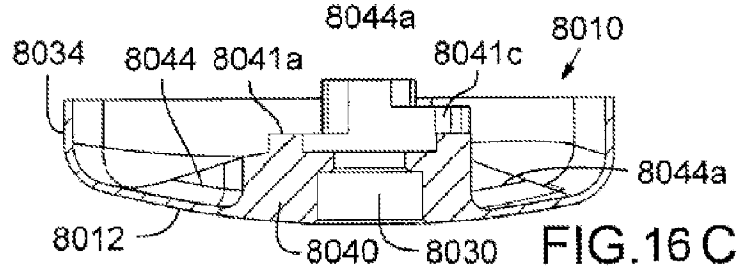


FIG. 16C

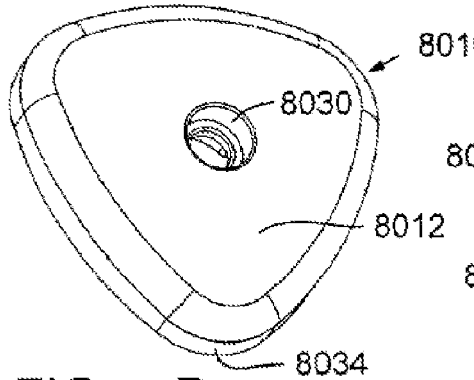
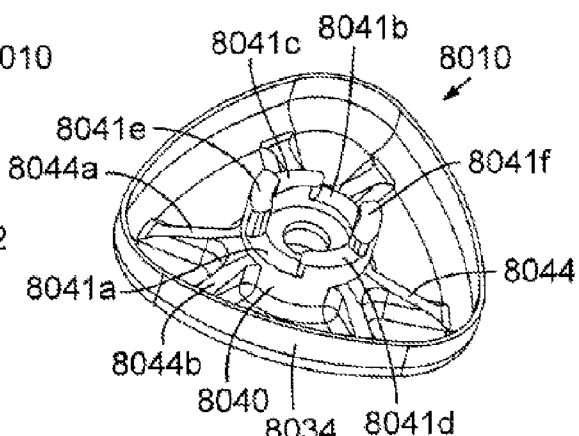


FIG. 16D



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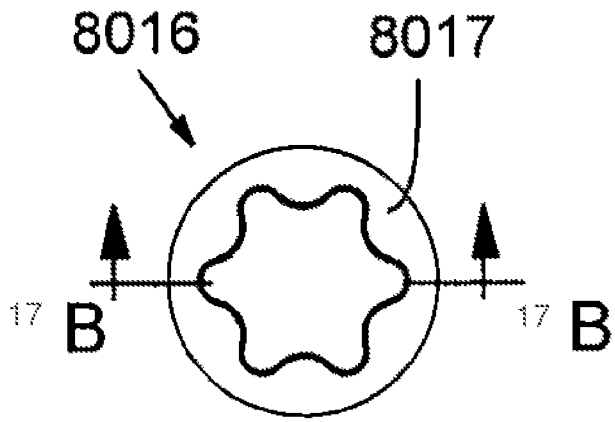
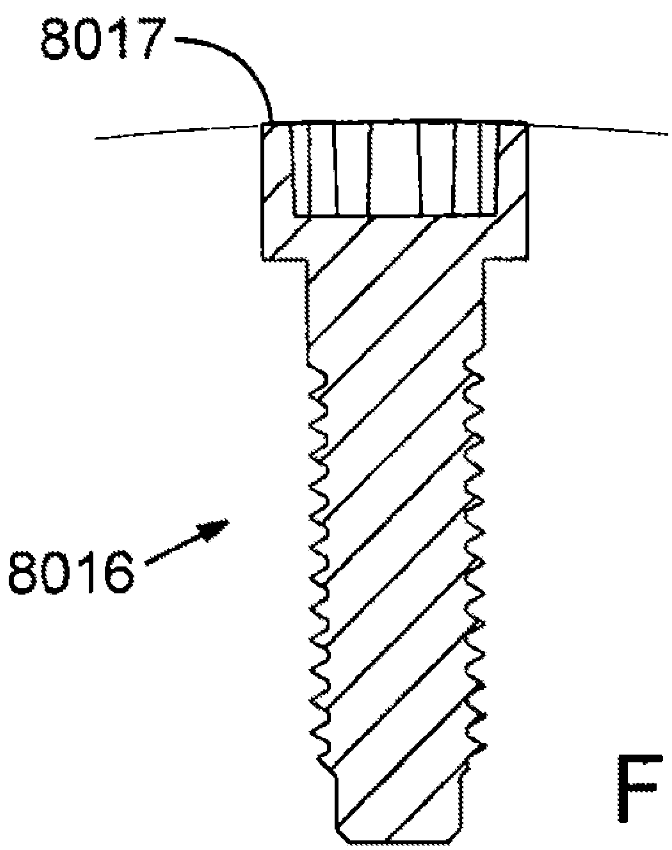


FIG. 17A



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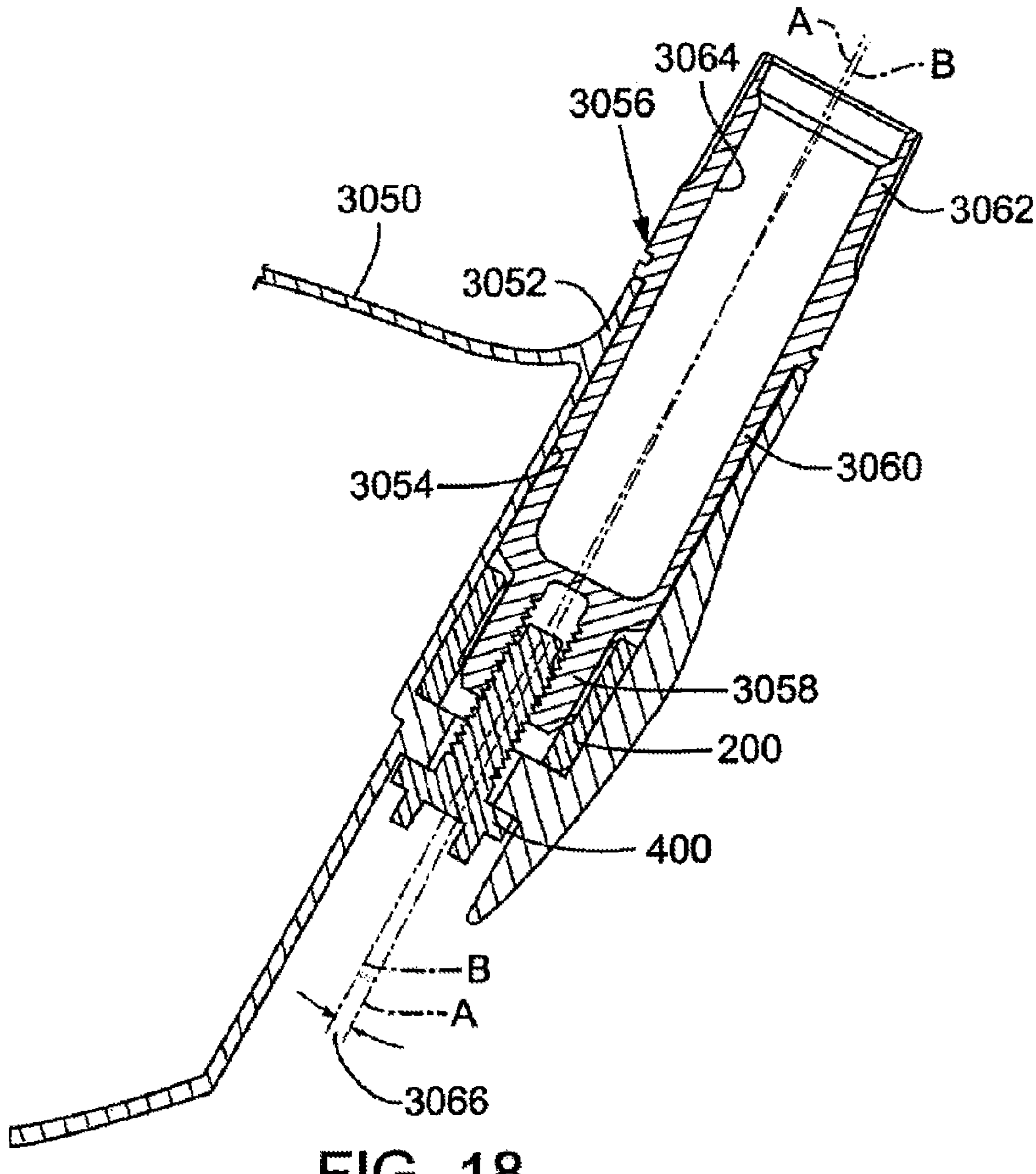

FIG. 18

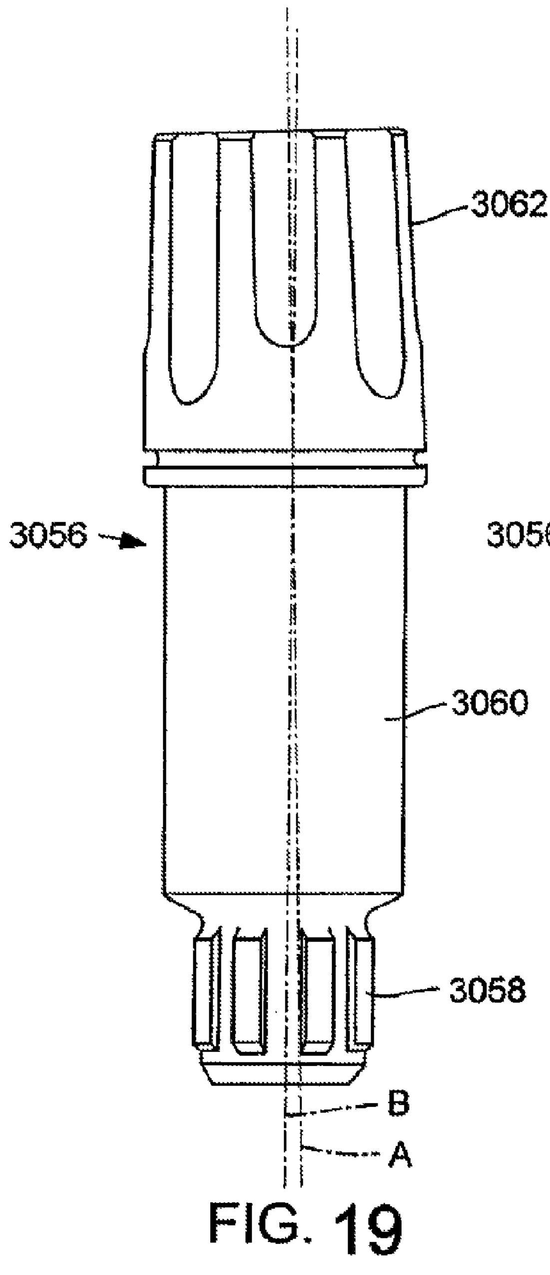

FIG. 19

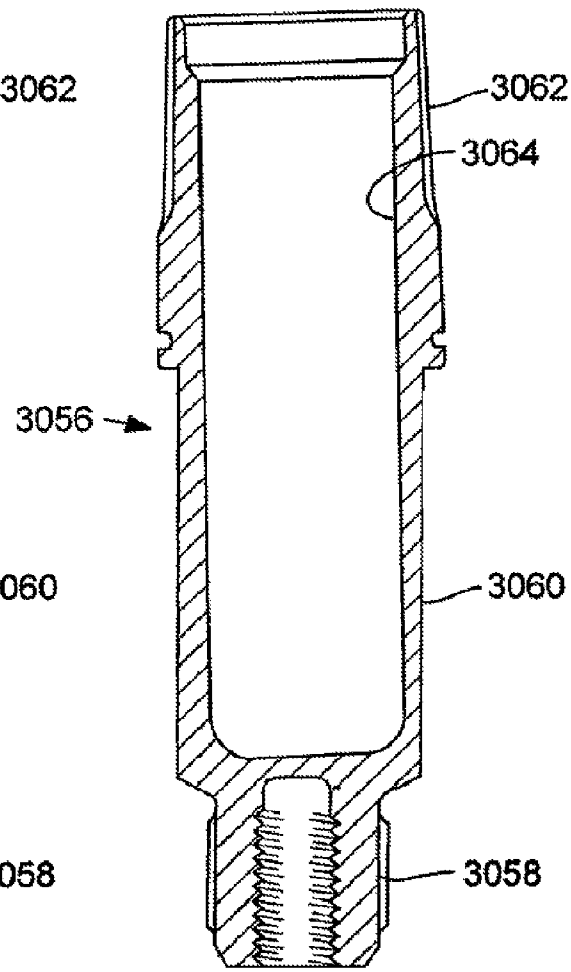

FIG. 20

GOLF CLUB HEAD

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/581,516, filed Dec. 29, 2011, which application is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND

A golf club set includes various types of clubs for use in different conditions or circumstances in which a ball is hit during a golf game. A set of clubs typically includes a driver for hitting the ball the longest distance on a course. Fairway woods, rescue clubs, and hybrid clubs can be used for hitting the ball shorter distances than the driver. A set of irons are used for hitting the ball within a range of distances typically shorter than the driver or woods.

Designers and manufacturers of wood-type golf club heads (e.g., drivers, fairway woods, rescue clubs, hybrid clubs, etc.) have sought to find mass savings opportunities within the club head structure. Discretionary mass generally refers to the mass of material that can be removed from various structures providing mass. In some cases, the mass is removed for the purpose of reducing overall club mass to allow for higher club head speeds. In other cases, the removed mass can be distributed elsewhere to other structures within the golf club head to achieve desired mass properties, or to allow for the addition of adjustability features which typically add mass to the club head.

The acoustical properties of golf club heads, e.g., the sound a golf club head generates upon impact with a golf ball, affect the overall feel of a golf club by providing instant auditory feedback to the user of the club. For example, the auditory feedback can affect the feel of the club by providing an indication as to how well the golf ball was struck by the club, thereby promoting user confidence in the club and himself.

The sound generated by a golf club head is based on the rate, or frequency, at which the golf club head vibrates upon impact with the golf ball. Generally, for wood-type golf clubs (as distinguished from iron-type golf clubs), particularly those made of steel or titanium alloys, a desired frequency is generally around 3,000 Hz and preferably greater than 3,200 Hz. A frequency less than 3,000 Hz may result in negative auditory feedback and thus a golf club with an undesirable feel.

Accordingly, it would be desirable to provide wood-type golf club heads having features that provide mass savings and opportunities to provide discretionary mass. It would also be desirable to increase the vibration frequencies of golf club heads having relatively large volumes, relatively thin walls, and other frequency reducing features in order to provide a golf club head that provides desirable feel through positive auditory feedback but without sacrificing the head's performance.

SUMMARY OF THE DESCRIPTION

Described herein are embodiments of wood-type golf club heads having a hollow body comprising a sole portion, a crown portion, a skirt portion, and a striking face. The golf club head body can include a front portion, rear portion, heel portion and toe portion. Examples of the golf club heads include wood-type golf club heads, such as drivers, fairway woods, rescue clubs, hybrid clubs, and the like.

In one aspect, the crown portion of the golf club head body includes at least a portion having a lattice-like structure comprising thin regions surrounded by a web of relatively thicker regions. In some examples of golf club heads constructed of metallic alloys (e.g., titanium alloys, steel alloys, aluminum alloys, etc.), the thin regions have a thickness of from about 0.3 mm to about 0.6 mm, such as from about 0.35 mm to about 0.5 mm. In some examples, the relatively thicker regions have a thickness of from about 0.5 mm to about 1.0 mm, such as from about 0.5 mm to about 0.7 mm.

In a second aspect, described herein are embodiments of wood-type golf club heads having at least one stiffening member extending within the internal portion of the head. For example, according to one embodiment, a wood-type golf club head can include a body that has at least one wall defining an interior cavity. The golf club head can also include at least one stiffening tube projecting inwardly from the at least one wall.

The foregoing and other features and advantages of the described golf club heads will become more apparent from the following detailed description, which proceeds with reference to the accompanying figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention is illustrated by way of example and not limitation in the figures of the accompanying drawings in which like references indicate similar elements.

FIG. **1** is a front elevation view of an exemplary embodiment of a golf club head.

FIG. **2** is a top plan view of the golf club head of FIG. **1**.

FIG. **3** is a side elevation view from a toe side of the golf club head of FIG. **1**.

FIG. **4** is a front elevation view of the golf club of FIG. **1** illustrating club head origin and center of gravity origin coordinate systems.

FIG. **5** is a top plan view of the golf club of FIG. **1** illustrating the club head origin and center of gravity origin coordinate systems.

FIG. **6** is a side elevation view from a toe side of the golf club of FIG. **1** illustrating the club head origin and center of gravity origin coordinate systems.

FIGS. **7**A-B are rear elevation and top plan views, respectively, of an exemplary embodiment of a golf club head showing (in dashed lines) a lattice-like structure formed on the interior surface of the crown.

FIGS. **8**A-B are rear elevation and top plan views, respectively, of another exemplary embodiment of a golf club head showing (in dashed lines) a lattice-like structure formed on the interior surface of the crown.

FIG. **9** is a top plan view of still another exemplary embodiment of a golf club head showing (in dashed lines) a lattice-like structure formed on the interior surface of the crown.

FIG. **10**A is a front view of an exemplary embodiment of a golf club head with a forward portion of the club head removed for clarity.

FIG. **10**B is a top view of the golf club head embodiment shown in FIG. **10**A with a portion of the crown removed for clarity.

FIG. **11**A is a front view of another exemplary embodiment of a golf club head with a forward portion of the club head removed for clarity.

FIG. **11**B is a top view of the golf club head embodiment shown in FIG. **11**A with a portion of the crown removed for clarity.

FIG. **12**A is a front view of still another exemplary embodiment of a golf club head with a forward portion of the club head removed for clarity.

FIG. **12**B is a top view of the golf club head embodiment shown in FIG. **12**A with a portion of the crown removed for clarity.

FIG. **13**A is a front view of a golf club head, according to another embodiment.

FIG. **13**B is a side view of the golf club head of FIG. **13**A.

FIG. **13**C is a rear view of the golf club head of FIG. **13**A.

FIG. **13**D is a bottom view of the golf club head of FIG. **13**A.

FIG. **13**E is a cross-sectional view of the golf club head of FIG. **13**B, taken along line **13**E-**13**E.

FIG. **13**F is a cross-sectional view of the golf club head of FIG. **13**C, taken along line **13**F-**13**F.

FIG. **14** is an exploded perspective view of the golf club head of FIG. **13**A.

FIG. **15**A is a bottom view of a body of the golf club head of FIG. **13**A, showing a recessed cavity in the sole.

FIG. **15**B is a cross-sectional view of the golf club head of FIG. **15**A, taken along line **15**B-**15**B.

FIG. **15**C is a cross-sectional view of the golf club head of FIG. **15**A, taken along line **15**C-**15**C.

FIG. **15**D is an enlarged cross-sectional view of a raised platform or projection formed in the sole of the club head of FIG. **15**A.

FIG. **15**E is a bottom view of a body of the golf club head of FIG. **13**A, showing an alternative orientation of the raised platform or projection.

FIG. **16**A is top view of an adjustable sole portion of the golf club head of FIG. **13**A.

FIG. **16**B is a side view of the adjustable sole portion of FIG. **16**A.

FIG. **16**C is a cross-sectional side view of the adjustable sole portion of FIG. **16**A.

FIG. **16**D is a perspective view of the bottom of the adjustable sole portion of FIG. **16**A.

FIG. **16**E is a perspective view of the top of the adjustable sole portion of FIG. **16**A.

FIG. **17**A is a plan view of the head of a screw that can be used to secure the adjustable sole portion of FIG. **16**A to a club head.

FIG. **17**B is a cross-sectional view of the screw of FIG. **17**A, taken along line A-A.

FIG. **18** is an enlarged cross-sectional view of a golf club head having a removable shaft, in accordance with another embodiment.

FIGS. **19** and **20** are front elevation and cross-sectional views, respectively, of a shaft sleeve of the assembly shown in FIG. **18**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The following disclosure describes embodiments of golf club heads for wood-type clubs (e.g., drivers, fairway woods, rescue clubs, hybrid clubs, etc.) that incorporate structures providing improved weight distribution, improved sound characteristics, improved adjustability features, and/or combinations of the foregoing characteristics. The disclosed embodiments should not be construed as limiting in any way. Instead, the present disclosure is directed toward all novel and nonobvious features and aspects of the various disclosed embodiments, alone and in various combinations and subcombinations with one another. Furthermore, any features or aspects of the disclosed embodiments can be used in various combinations and subcombinations with one another. The disclosed embodiments are not limited to any specific aspect or feature or combination thereof, nor do the disclosed embodiments require that any one or more specific advantages be present or problems be solved.

The present disclosure makes reference to the accompanying drawings which form a part hereof, wherein like numerals designate like parts throughout. The drawings illustrate specific embodiments, but other embodiments may be formed and structural changes may be made without departing from the intended scope of this disclosure. Directions and references may be used to facilitate discussion of the drawings but are not intended to be limiting. For example, certain terms may be used such as "up," "down," "upper," "lower," "horizontal," "vertical," "left," "right," and the like. These terms are used, where applicable, to provide some clarity of description when dealing with relative relationships, particularly with respect to the illustrated embodiments. Such terms are not, however, intended to imply absolute relationships, positions, and/or orientations. Accordingly, the following detailed description shall not to be construed in a limiting sense.

I. Golf Club Heads

A. Normal Address Position

Club heads and many of their physical characteristics disclosed herein will be described using "normal address position" as the club head reference position, unless otherwise indicated. FIGS. **1-3** illustrate one embodiment of a wood-type golf club head at normal address position. FIG. **1** illustrates a front elevation view of golf club head **100**, FIG. **2** illustrates a top plan view of the golf club head **100**, and FIG. **3** illustrates a side elevation view of the golf club head **100** from the toe side. By way of preliminary description, the club head **100** includes a hosel **120** and a ball striking club face **118**. At normal address position, the club head **100** is positioned on a plane **125** above and parallel to a ground plane **117**.

As used herein, "normal address position" means the club head position wherein a vector normal to the center of the club face **118** lies in a first vertical plane (a vertical plane is perpendicular to the ground plane **117**), the centerline axis **121** of the club shaft lies in a second vertical plane, and the first vertical plane and the second vertical plane perpendicularly intersect.

B. Club Head Features

A wood-type golf club head, such as the golf club head **100** shown in FIGS. **1-3**, includes a hollow body **110** defining a crown portion **112**, a sole portion **114**, a skirt portion **116**, and a ball striking club face **118**. The ball striking club face **118** can be integrally formed with the body **110** or attached to the body. The body **110** further includes a hosel **120**, which defines a hosel bore **124** adapted to receive a golf club shaft. The body **110** further includes a heel portion **126**, a toe portion **128**, a front portion **130**, and a rear portion **132**.

The club head **100** also has a volume, typically measured in cubic-centimeters (cm^3), equal to the volumetric displacement of the club head, assuming any apertures are sealed by a substantially planar surface, using the method described in the Procedure for Measuring the Club Head Size of Wood Clubs, Revision 1.0, Section 5 (Nov. 21, 2003), as specified by the United States Golf Association (USGA) and the R&A Rules Limited (R&A).

As used herein, "crown" means an upper portion of the club head above a peripheral outline **134** of the club head as viewed from a top-down direction and rearward of the topmost portion of a ball striking surface **122** of the ball striking club face **118**. As used herein, "sole" means a lower portion of the club head **100** extending upwards from a lowest point of the club head when the club head is at the normal address position. In some implementations, the sole **114** extends approximately 50% to 60% of the distance from the lowest point of the club head to the crown **112**. In other implementations, the sole **114** extends upwardly from the lowest point of the golf club head **110** a shorter distance. Further, the sole **114** can define a substantially flat portion extending substantially horizontally relative to the ground **117** when in normal address position or can have an arced or convex shape as shown in FIG. **1**. As used herein, "skirt" means a side portion of the club head **100** between the crown **112** and the sole **114** that extends across a periphery **134** of the club head, excluding the striking surface **122**, from the toe portion **128**, around the rear portion **132**, to the heel portion **126**. As used herein, "striking surface" means a front or external surface of the ball striking club face **118** configured to impact a golf ball. In some embodiments, the striking surface **122** can be a striking plate attached to the body **110** using known attachment techniques, such as welding. Further, the striking surface **122** can have a variable thickness. In certain embodiments, the striking surface **122** has a bulge and roll curvature (discussed more fully below).

The body **110**, or any parts thereof, can be made from a metal alloy (e.g., an alloy of titanium, an alloy of steel, an alloy of aluminum, and/or an alloy of magnesium), a composite material (e.g., a graphite or carbon fiber composite) a ceramic material, or any combination thereof. The crown **112**, sole **114**, skirt **116**, and ball striking club face **118** can be integrally formed using techniques such as molding, cold forming, casting, and/or forging. Alternatively, any one or more of the crown **112**, sole **114**, skirt **116**, or ball striking club face **118** can be attached to the other components by known means (e.g., adhesive bonding, welding, and the like).

In some embodiments, the striking face **118** is made of a composite material, while in other embodiments, the striking face **118** is made from a metal alloy (e.g., an alloy of titanium, steel, aluminum, and/or magnesium), ceramic material, or a combination of composite, metal alloy, and/or ceramic materials.

When at normal address position, the club shaft extends along the club shaft axis **121** and is disposed at a lie angle **119** relative to the plane **125** parallel to the ground plane **117** (as shown in FIG. **1**) and the club face has a loft angle **115** (as shown in FIG. **3**). Referring to FIG. **1**, the lie angle **119** refers to the angle between the centerline axis **121** of the club shaft and the ground plane **117** at normal address position. Referring to FIG. **3**, loft angle **115** refers to the angle between a tangent line **127** to the club face **118** and a vector **129** normal to the ground plane at normal address position.

FIGS. **4-6** illustrate coordinate systems that can be used in describing features of the disclosed golf club head embodiments. FIG. **4** illustrates a front elevation view of the golf club head **100**, FIG. **5** illustrates a top plan view of the golf club head **100**, and FIG. **6** illustrates a side elevation view of the golf club head **100** from the toe side. As shown in FIGS. **4-6**, a center **123** is disposed on the striking surface **122**. For purposes of this description, the center **123** is defined as the intersection of the midpoints of a height (H_{SS}) and a width (W_{SS}) of the striking surface **122**. Both H_{SS} and W_{SS} are determined using the striking face curve (S_{SS}). The striking face curve is bounded on its periphery by all points where the face transitions from a substantially uniform bulge radius (face heel-to-toe radius of curvature) and a substantially uniform roll radius (face crown-to-sole radius of curvature) to the body. H_{SS} is the distance from the periphery proximate to the sole portion of S_{SS} (also referred to as the bottom radius of the club face) to the periphery proximate to the crown portion of S_{SS} (also referred to as the top radius of the club face) measured in a vertical plane (perpendicular to ground) that extends through the center **123** of the face (e.g., this plane is substantially normal to the x-axis). Similarly, W_{SS} is the distance from the periphery proximate to the heel portion of S_{SS} to the periphery proximate to the toe portion of S_{SS} measured in a horizontal plane (e.g., substantially parallel to ground) that extends through the center **123** of the face (e.g., this plane is substantially normal to the z-axis). In other words, the center **123** along the z-axis corresponds to a point that bisects into two equal parts a line drawn from a point just on the inside of the top radius of the striking surface (and centered along the x-axis of the striking surface) to a point just on the inside of the bottom radius of the face plate (and centered along the x-axis of the striking surface). For purposes of this description, the center **123** is also referred to as the "geometric center" of the golf club striking surface **122**. See also U.S.G.A. "Procedure for Measuring the Flexibility of a Golf Clubhead," Revision 2.0 for the methodology to measure the geometric center of the striking face.

C. Golf Club Head Coordinates

Referring to FIGS. **4-6**, a club head origin coordinate system is defined such that the location of various features of the club head (including a club head center-of-gravity (CG) **150**) can be determined. A club head origin **160** is illustrated on the club head **100** positioned at the center **123** of the striking surface **122**.

The head origin coordinate system defined with respect to the head origin **160** includes three axes: a z-axis **165** extending through the head origin **160** in a generally vertical direction relative to the ground **117** when the club head **100** is at the normal address position; an x-axis **170** extending through the head origin **160** in a toe-to-heel direction generally parallel to the striking surface **122** (e.g., generally tangential to the striking surface **122** at the center **123**) and generally perpendicular to the z-axis **165**; and a y-axis **175** extending through the head origin **160** in a front-to-back direction and generally perpendicular to the x-axis **170** and to the z-axis **165**. The x-axis **170** and the y-axis **175** both extend in generally horizontal directions relative to the ground **117** when the club head **100** is at the normal address position. The x-axis **170** extends in a positive direction from the origin **160** towards the heel **126** of the club head **100**. The y-axis **175** extends in a positive direction from the head origin **160** towards the rear portion **132** of the club head **100**. The z-axis **165** extends in a positive direction from the origin **160** towards the crown **112**.

D. Center of Gravity

Generally, the center of gravity (CG) of a golf club head is the point at which the entire weight of the golf club head may be considered as concentrated so that if supported at this point the head would remain in equilibrium in any position.

Referring to FIGS. **4-6**, a CG **150** is shown as a point inside the body **110** of the club head **100**. The location of the club CG **150** can also be defined with reference to the club head origin coordinate system. For example, and using millimeters as the unit of measure, a CG **150** that is located 3.2 mm from the head origin **160** toward the toe of the club head along the x-axis, 36.7 mm from the head origin **160** toward the rear of the club head along the y-axis, and 4.1 mm from the head origin **160** toward the sole of the club head along the z-axis can be defined as having a CG_x of −3.2 mm, a CG_y of −36.7 mm, and a CG_z of −4.1 mm.

The CG can also be used to define a coordinate system with the CG as the origin of the coordinate system. For example, and as illustrated in FIGS. **4-6**, the CG origin coordinate system defined with respect to the CG origin **150** includes three axes: a CG z-axis **185** extending through the CG **150** in a generally vertical direction relative to the ground **117** when the club head **100** is at normal address position; a CG x-axis **190** extending through the CG origin **150** in a toe-to-heel direction generally parallel to the striking surface **122**, and generally perpendicular to the CG z-axis **185**; and a CG y-axis **195** extending through the CG origin **150** in a front-to-back direction and generally perpendicular to the CG x-axis **190** and to the CG z-axis **185**. The CG x-axis **190** and the CG y-axis **195** both extend in generally horizontal directions relative to the ground **117** when the club head **100** is at normal address position. The CG x-axis **190** extends in a positive direction from the CG origin **150** to the heel **126** of the club head **100**. The CG y-axis **195** extends in a positive direction from the CG origin **150** towards the rear portion **132** of the golf club head **100**. The CG z-axis **185** extends in a positive direction from the CG origin **150** towards the crown **112**. Thus, the axes of the CG origin coordinate system are parallel to corresponding axes of the head origin coordinate system. In particular, the CG z-axis **185** is parallel to z-axis **165**, CG x-axis **190** is parallel to x-axis **170**, and CG y-axis **195** is parallel to y-axis **175**.

As best shown in FIG. **6**, FIGS. **4-6** also show a projected CG point **180** on the golf club head striking surface **122**. The projected CG point **180** is the point on the striking surface **122** that intersects with a line passes through the CG **150** and that is normal to a tangent line of the ball striking club face **118** at the projected CG point **180**. This projected CG point **180** can also be referred to as the "zero-torque" point because it indicates the point on the ball striking club face **118** that is centered with the CG **150**. Thus, if a golf ball makes contact with the club face **118** at the projected CG point **180**, the golf club head will not twist about any axis of rotation since no torque is produced by the impact of the golf ball.

E. Mass Moments of Inertia

Referring to FIGS. **4-6**, golf club head moments of inertia are typically defined about the three CG axes that extend through the golf club head center-of-gravity **150**. For example, a moment of inertia about the golf club head CG x-axis **190** can be calculated by the following equation

$$I_{XX}=\int(z^2+y^2)dm \quad (1)$$

where y is the distance from a golf club head CG xz-plane to an infinitesimal mass, dm, and z is the distance from a golf club head CG xy-plane to the infinitesimal mass, dm. The golf club head CG xz-plane is a plane defined by the golf club head CG x-axis **190** and the golf club head CG z-axis **185**. The CG xy-plane is a plane defined by the golf club head CG x-axis **190** and the golf club head CG y-axis **195**.

The moment of inertia about the CG x-axis (I_{XX}) is an indication of the ability of the golf club head to resist twisting about the CG x-axis. A higher moment of inertia about the CG x-axis (I_{XX}) indicates a higher resistance to the upward and downward twisting of the golf club head **100** resulting from high and low off-center impacts with the golf ball.

Similarly, a moment of inertia about the golf club head CG z-axis **185** can be calculated by the following equation

$$I_{ZZ}=\int(x^2+y^2)dm \quad (1)$$

where x is the distance from a golf club head CG yz-plane to an infinitesimal mass, dm, and y is the distance from a golf club head CG xz-plane to the infinitesimal mass, dm. The CG yz-plane is a plane defined by the golf club head CG y-axis **195** and the golf club head CG z-axis **190**. The golf club head CG xz-plane is a plane defined by the golf club head CG x-axis **190** and the golf club head CG z-axis **185**.

The moment of inertia about the CG z-axis (I_{ZZ}) is an indication of the ability of the golf club head to resist twisting about the CG z-axis. A higher moment of inertia about the CG z-axis (I_{ZZ}) indicates a higher resistance to the toeward and heelward twisting of the golf club head **100** resulting from toe-side and heel-side off-center impacts with the golf ball.

F. Adjusting Golf Club Head Mass

Golf club heads can use one or more weight plates, weight pads, or weight ports in order to change the mass moment of inertia of the golf club head, to change the center of gravity to a desired location, or for other purposes. For example, certain embodiments of the disclosed golf club heads have one or more integral weight pads cast into the golf club head at predetermined locations (e.g., in the sole of the golf club head) that change the location of the club head's center-of-gravity. Also, epoxy can be added to the interior of the club head through the club head's hosel opening to obtain a desired weight distribution. Alternatively, one or more weights formed of high-density materials (e.g., tungsten or tungsten alloy) can be attached to the sole or other portions of the golf club head. Such weights can be permanently attached to the club head. Furthermore, the shape of such weights can vary and is not limited to any particular shape. For example, the weights can have a disc, elliptical, cylindrical, or other shape.

The golf club head **100** can also define one or more weight ports formed in the body **110** that are configured to receive one or more weights. For example, one or more weight ports can be disposed in the crown **112**, the sole **114**, and/or the skirt **116**. The weight port can have any of a number of various configurations to receive and retain any of a number of weights or weight assemblies, such as described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 7,407,447 and 7,419,441, which are incorporated herein by reference. Inclusion of one or more weights in the weight port(s) provides a customized club head mass distribution with corresponding customized moments of inertia and center-of-gravity locations. Adjusting the location of the weight port(s) and the mass of the weights and/or weight assemblies provides various possible locations of center-of-gravity and various possible mass moments of inertia using the same club head.

G. Adjusting Golf Club Head Lie, Loft, and Face Angles

In some implementations, an adjustable mechanism is provided on the sole **114** to "decouple" the relationship between face angle and hosel/shaft loft, i.e., to allow for separate adjustment of square loft and face angle of a golf club. For example, some embodiments of the golf club head **100** include an adjustable sole portion that can be adjusted relative to the club head body **110** to raise and lower the rear end of the club head relative to the ground. Further detail concerning the adjustable sole portion is provided in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2011/0312437, which is incorporated herein by reference.

For example, FIGS. **13-17** illustrate a golf club head **8000** according to an embodiment that also includes an adjustable sole portion. As shown in FIGS. **13**A-**13**F, the club head **8000** comprises a club head body **8002** having a heel **8005**, a toe **8007**, a rear end **8006**, a forward striking face **8004**, a top portion or crown **8021**, and a bottom portion or sole **8022**. The body also includes a hosel **8008** for supporting a shaft (not shown). The sole **8022** defines a leading edge surface portion **8024** adjacent the lower edge of the striking face **8004** that extends transversely across the sole **8022** (i.e., the leading edge surface portion **8024** extends in a direction from the heel **8005** to the toe **8007** of the club head body). The hosel **8008** can be adapted to receive a removable shaft sleeve **8009**, as disclosed herein.

The sole **8022** further includes an adjustable sole portion **8010** (also referred to as a sole piece) that can be adjusted relative to the club head body **8002** to a plurality of rotational positions to raise and lower the rear end **8006** of the club head relative to the ground. This can rotate the club head about the leading edge surface portion **8024** of the sole **8022**, changing the sole angle. As best shown in FIG. **14**, the sole **8022** of the club head body **8002** can be formed with a recessed cavity **8014** that is shaped to receive the adjustable sole portion **8010**.

As best shown in FIG. **16**A, the adjustable sole portion **8010** can be triangular. In other embodiments, the adjustable sole portion **8010** can have other shapes, including a rectangle, square, pentagon, hexagon, circle, oval, star or combinations thereof. Desirably, although not necessarily, the sole portion **8010** is generally symmetrical about a center axis as shown. As best shown in FIG. **16**C, the sole portion **8010** has an outer rim **8034** extending upwardly from the edge of a bottom wall **8012**. The rim **8034** can be sized and shaped to be received within the walls of the recessed cavity **8014** with a small gap or clearance between the two when the adjustable sole portion **8010** is installed in the body **8002**. The bottom wall **8012** and outer rim **8034** can form a thin-walled structure as shown. At the center of the bottom surface **8012** can be a recessed screw hole **8030** that passes completely through the adjustable sole portion **8010**.

A circular, or cylindrical, wall **8040** can surround the screw hole **8030** on the upper/inner side of the adjustable sole portion **8010**. The wall **8040** can also be triangular, square, pentagonal, etc., in other embodiments. The wall **8040** can be comprised of several sections **8041** having varying heights. Each section **8041** of the wall **8040** can have about the same width and thickness, and each section **8041** can have the same height as the section diametrically across from it. In this manner, the circular wall **8040** can be symmetrical about the centerline axis of the screw hole **8030**. Furthermore, each pair of wall sections **8041** can have a different height than each of the other pairs of wall sections. Each pair of wall sections **8041** is sized and shaped to mate with corresponding sections on the club head to set the sole portion **8010** at a predetermined height, as further discussed below.

For example, in the triangular embodiment of the adjustable sole portion **8010** shown in FIG. **16**E, the circular wall **8040** has six wall sections **8041***a, b, c, d, e* and *f* that make up three pairs of wall sections, each pair having different heights. Each pair of wall sections **8041** project upward a different distance from the upper/inner surface of the adjustable sole portion **8010**. Namely, a first pair is comprised of wall sections **8041***a* and **8041***b*; a second pair is comprised of **8041***c* and **8041***d* that extend past the first pair; and a third pair is comprised of wall sections **8041***e* and **8041***f* that extend past the first and second pairs. Each pair of wall sections **8041** desirably is symmetrical about the centerline axis of the screw hole **8030**. The tallest pair of wall sections **8041***e*, **8041***f* can extend beyond the height of the outer rim **8034**, as shown in FIGS. **16**B and **16**C. The number of wall section pairs (three) desirably equals the number of planes of symmetry (three) of the overall shape (see FIG. **16**A) of the adjustable sole portion **8010**. As explained in more detail below, a triangular adjustable sole portion **8010** can be installed into a corresponding triangular recessed cavity **8014** in three different orientations, each of which aligns one of the pairs of wall sections **8041** with mating surfaces on the sole portion **8010** to adjust the sole angle.

The adjustable sole portion **8010** can also include any number ribs **8044**, as shown in FIG. **16**E, to add structural rigidity. Such increased rigidity is desirable because, when installed in the body **8002**, the bottom wall **8012** and parts of the outer rim **8034** can protrude below the surrounding portions of the sole **8022** and therefore can take the brunt of impacts of the club head **8000** against the ground or other surfaces. Furthermore, because the bottom wall **8012** and outer rim **8034** of the adjustable sole portion **8010** are desirably made of thin-walled material to reduce weight, adding structural ribs is a weight-efficient means of increasing rigidity and durability.

The triangular embodiment of the adjustable sole portion **8010** shown in FIG. **16**E includes three pairs of ribs **8044** extending from the circular wall **8040** radially outwardly toward the outer rim **8034**. The ribs **8044** desirably are angularly spaced around the center wall **8040** in equal intervals. The ribs **8044** can be attached to the lower portion of the circular wall **8040** and taper in height as they extend outward along the upper/inner surface of the bottom wall **8012** toward the outer wall **8034**. As shown, each rib can comprise first and second sections **8044***a*, **8044***b* that extent from a common apex at the circular wall **8040** to separate locations on the outer wall **8034**. In alternative embodiments, a greater or fewer number of ribs **8044** can be used (i.e., greater or fewer than three ribs **8044**).

As shown in FIG. **15**A-C, the recessed cavity **8014** in the sole **8022** of the body **8002** can be shaped to fittingly receive the adjustable sole portion **8010**. The cavity **8014** can include a cavity side wall **8050**, an upper surface **8052**, and a raised platform, or projection, **8054** extending down from the upper surface **8052**. The cavity wall **8050** can be substantially vertical to match the outer rim **8034** of the adjustable sole portion **8010** and can extend from the sole **8022** up to the upper surface **8052**. The upper surface **8052** can be substantially flat and proportional in shape to the bottom wall **8012** of the adjustable sole portion **8010**. As best shown in FIG. **14**, the cavity side wall **8050** and upper surface **8052** can define a triangular void that is shaped to receive the sole portion **8010**. In alternative embodiments, the cavity **8014** can be replaced with an outer triangular channel for receiving the outer rim **8034** and a separate inner cavity to receive the wall sections **8041**. The cavity **8014** can have various other shapes, but desirably is shaped to correspond to the shape of the sole portion **8010**. For example, if the sole portion **8010** is square, then the cavity **8014** desirably is square.

As shown in FIG. **15**A, the raised platform **8054** can be geometrically centered on the upper surface **8052**. The platform **8054** can be bowtie-shaped and include a center post **8056** and two flared projections, or ears, **8058** extending from opposite sides of the center post, as shown in FIG. **15**D. The platform **8054** can also be oriented in different rotational positions with respect to the club head body **8002**. For example, FIG. **15**E shows an embodiment wherein the platform **8054** is rotated 90-degrees compared to the embodiment shown in FIG. **15**A. The platform can be more or less susceptible to cracking or other damage depending on the rotational position. In particular, durability tests have shown that the platform is less susceptible to cracking in the embodiment shown in FIG. **15**E compared to the embodiment shown in FIG. **15**A.

In other embodiments, the shape of the raised platform **8054** can be rectangular, wherein the center post and the projections collectively form a rectangular block. The projections **8058** can also have parallel sides rather than sides that flare out from the center post. The center post **8056** can include a threaded screw hole **8060** to receive a screw **8016** (see FIG. **17**) for securing the sole portion **8010** to the club head. In some embodiments, the center post **8056** is cylindrical, as shown in FIG. **15**D. The outer diameter D**1** of a cylindrical center post **8056** (FIG. **15**D) can be less than the inner diameter D**2** of the circular wall **8040** of the adjustable sole portion **8010** (FIG. **16**A), such that the center post can rest inside the circular wall when the adjustable sole portion **8010** is installed. In other embodiments, the center post **8056** can be triangular, square, hexagonal, or various other shapes to match the shape of the inner surface of the wall **8040** (e.g., if the inner surface of wall **8040** is non-cylindrical).

The projections **8058** can have a different height than the center post **8056**, that is to say that the projections can extend downwardly from the cavity roof **8052** either farther than or not as far as the center post. In the embodiment shown in FIG. **14**, the projections and the center post have the same height. FIG. **14** also depicts one pair of projections **8058** extending from opposite sides of the center post **8056**. Other embodiments can include a set of three or more projections spaced apart around the center post. Because the embodiment shown in FIG. **14** incorporates a triangular shaped adjustable sole portion **8010** having three pairs of varying height wall sections **8041**, the projections **8058** each occupy about one-sixth of the circumferential area around of the center post **8056**. In other words, each projection **8058** spans a roughly 60-degree section (see FIG. **15**D) to match the wall sections **8041** that also each span a roughly 60-degree section of the circular wall **8040** (see FIG. **16**A). The projections **8058** do not need to be exactly the same circumferential width as the wall sections **8041** and can be slightly narrower that the width of the wall sections. The distance from the centerline axis of the screw hole **8060** to the outer edge of the projections **8058** can be at least as great as the inner radius of the circular wall **8040**, and desirably is at least as great as the outer radius of the circular wall **8040** to provide a sufficient surface for the ends of the wall sections **8041** to seat upon when the adjustable sole portion **8010** is installed in the body **8002**.

A releasable locking mechanism or retaining mechanism desirably is provided to lock or retain the sole portion **8010** in place on the club head at a selected rotational orientation of the sole portion. For example, at least one fastener can extend through the bottom wall **8012** of the adjustable sole portion **8010** and can attach to the recessed cavity **8014** to secure the adjustable sole portion to the body **8002**. In the embodiment shown in FIG. **14**, the locking mechanism comprises a screw **8016** that extends through the recessed screw hole **8030** in the adjustable sole portion **8010** and into a threaded opening **8060** in the recessed cavity **8014** in the sole **8022** of the body **8002**. In other embodiments, more than one screw or another type of fastener can be used to lock the sole portion in place on the club head.

In the embodiment shown in FIG. **14**, the adjustable sole portion **8010** can be installed into the recessed cavity **8014** by aligning the outer rim **8034** with the cavity wall **8050**. As the outer rim **8034** telescopes inside of the cavity wall **8050**, the center post **8056** can telescope inside of the circular wall **8040**. The matching shapes of the outer rim **8034** and the cavity wall **8050** can align one of the three pairs of wall sections **8041** with the pair of projections **8058**. As the adjustable sole portion **8010** continues to telescope into the recessed cavity **8014**, one pair of wall sections **8041** will abut the pair of projections **8058**, stopping the adjustable sole portion from telescoping any further into the recessed cavity. The cavity wall **8050** can be deep enough to allow the outer rim **8034** to freely telescope into the recessed cavity without abutting the cavity roof **8052**, even when the shortest pair of wall sections **8041***a*, **8041***b* abuts the projections **8058**. While the wall sections **8041** abut the projections **8058**, the screw **8016** can be inserted and tightened as described above to secure the components in place. Even with only one screw in the center, as shown in FIG. **13**D, the adjustable sole portion **8010** is prevented from rotating by its triangular shape and the snug fit with the similarly shaped cavity wall **8050**.

As best shown in FIG. **13**C, the adjustable sole portion **8010** can have a bottom surface **8012** that is curved (see also FIG. **16**B) to match the curvature of the leading surface portion **8024** of the sole **8022**. In addition, the upper surface **8017** of the head of the screw **8016** can be curved (see FIG. **17**B) to match the curvature of the bottom surface of the adjustable sole portion **8010** and the leading surface portion **8024** of the sole **8022**.

In the illustrated embodiment, both the leading edge surface **8024** and the bottom surface **8012** of the adjustable sole portion **8010** are convex surfaces. In other embodiments, surfaces **8012** and **8024** are not necessarily curved surfaces but they desirably still have the same profile extending in the heel-to-toe direction. In this manner, if the club head **8000** deviates from the grounded address position (e.g., the club is held at a lower or flatter lie angle), the effective face angle of the club head does not change substantially, as further described below. The crown-to-face transition or top-line would stay relatively stable when viewed from the address position as the club is adjusted between the lie ranges described herein. Therefore, the golfer is better able to align the club with the desired direction of the target line.

In the embodiment shown in FIG. **13**D, the triangular sole portion **8010** has a first corner **8018** located toward the heel **8005** of the club head and a second corner **8020** located near the middle of the sole **8022**. A third corner **8019** is located rearward of the screw **8016**. In this manner, the adjustable sole portion **8010** can have a length (from corner **8018** to corner **8020**) that extends heel-to-toe across the club head less than half the width of the club head at that location of the club head. The adjustable sole portion **8010** is desirably positioned substantially heelward of a line L (see FIG. **13**D) that extends rearward from the center of the striking face **8004** such that a majority of the sole portion is located heelward of the line L. Studies have shown that most golfers address the ball with a lie angle between 10 and 20 degrees less than the intended scoreline lie angle of the club head (the lie angle when the club head is in the address position). The length, size, and position of the sole portion **8010** in the illustrated embodiment is selected to support the club head on the ground at the grounded address position or any lie angle between 0 and 20 degrees less than the lie angle at the grounded address position while minimizing the overall size of the sole portion (and therefore, the added mass to the club head). In alternative embodiments, the sole portion **8010** can have a length that is longer or shorter than that of the illustrated embodiment to support the club head at a greater or smaller range of lie angles. For example, in some embodiments, the sole portion **8010** can extend past the middle of the sole **8022** to support the club head at lie angles that are greater than the scoreline lie angle (the lie angle at the grounded address position).

The adjustable sole portion **8010** is furthermore desirably positioned entirely rearward of the center of gravity (CG) of the golf club head, as shown in FIG. **13**D. In some embodiments, the golf club head has an adjustable sole portion and a CG with a head origin x-axis (CGx) coordinate between about −10 mm and about 10 mm and a head origin y-axis (CGy) coordinate greater than about 10 mm or less than about 50 mm. In certain embodiments, the club head has a CG with an origin x-axis coordinate between about −5 mm and about 5 mm, an origin y-axis coordinate greater than about 0 mm and an origin z-axis (CGz) coordinate less than about 0 mm. In one embodiment, the CGz is less than 2 mm.

The CGy coordinate is located between the leading edge surface portion **8024** that contacts the ground surface and the point where the bottom wall **8012** of the adjustable sole portion **8010** contacts the ground surface (as measured along the head origin—y-axis).

The sole angle of the club head **8000** can be adjusted by changing the distance the adjustable sole portion **8010** extends from the bottom of the body **8002**. Adjusting the adjustable sole portion **8010** downwardly increases the sole angle of the club head **8000** while adjusting the sole portion upwardly decreases the sole angle of the club head. This can be done by loosening or removing the screw **8016** and rotating the adjustable sole portion **8010** such that a different pair of wall sections **8041** aligns with the projections **8058**, then re-tightening the screw. In a triangular embodiment, the adjustable sole portion **8010** can be rotated to three different discrete positions, with each position aligning a different height pair of wall sections **8041** with the projections **8058**. In this manner, the sole portion **8010** can be adjusted to extend three different distances from the bottom of the body **8002**, thus creating three different sole angle options.

In particular, the sole portion **8010** extends the shortest distance from the sole **8022** when the projections **8058** are aligned with wall sections **8041***a*, **8041***b*; the sole portion **8010** extends an intermediate distance when the projections are aligned with wall sections **8041***c*, **8041***d*; and the sole portion extends the farthest distance when the projections **8058** are aligned with wall sections **8041***e*, **8041***f*. Similarly, in an embodiment of the adjustable sole portion **8010** having a square shape, it is possible to have four different sole angle options.

In alternative embodiments, the adjustable sole portion **8010** can include more than or fewer than three pairs of wall sections **8041** that enable the adjustable sole portion to be adjusted to extend more than or fewer than three different discrete distances from the bottom of body **8002**.

The sole portion **8010** can be adjusted to extend different distances from the bottom of the body **8002**, as discussed above, which in turn causes a change in the face angle **30** of the club. In particular, adjusting the sole portion **8010** such that it extends the shortest distance from the bottom of the body **8002** (i.e. the projections **8058** are aligned with sections **8041***a* and **8041***b*) can result in an increased face angle or open the face and adjusting the sole portion such that it extends the farthest distance from the bottom of the body (i.e. the projections are aligned with sections **8041***e* and **8041***f*) can result in a decreased face angle or close the face. In particular embodiments, adjusting the sole portion **8010** can change the face angle of the golf club head **8000** about 0.5 to about 12 degrees. Also, the hosel loft angle can also be adjusted to achieve various combinations of square loft, grounded loft, face angle and hosel loft. Additionally, hosel loft can be adjusted while maintaining a desired face angle by adjusting the sole angle accordingly.

It can be appreciated that the non-circular shape of the sole portion **8010** and the recessed cavity **8014** serves to help prevent rotation of the sole portion relative to the recessed cavity and defines the predetermined positions for the sole portion. However, the adjustable sole portion **8010** could have a circular shape (not shown). To prevent a circular outer rim **8034** from rotating within a cavity, one or more notches can be provided on the outer rim **8034** that interact with one or more tabs extending inward from the cavity side wall **8050**, or vice versa. In such circular embodiments, the sole portion **8010** can include any number of pairs of wall sections **8041** having different heights. Sufficient notches on the outer rim **8034** can be provided to correspond to each of the different rotational positions that the wall sections **8041** allow for.

In other embodiments having a circular sole portion **8010**, the sole portion can be rotated within a cavity in the club head to an infinite number of positions. In one such embodiment, the outer rim of the sole portion and the cavity side wall **8050** can be without notches and the circular wall **8040** can comprise one or more gradually inclining ramp-like wall sections (not shown). The ramp-like wall sections can allow the sole portion **8010** to gradually extend farther from the bottom of the body **8002** as the sole portion is gradually rotated in the direction of the incline such that projections **8058** contact gradually higher portions of the ramp-like wall sections. For example, two ramp-like wall sections, each extending about 180-degrees around the circular wall **8040**, can be included, such that the shortest portion of each ramp-like wall section is adjacent to the tallest portion of the other wall section. In such an embodiment having an "analog" adjustability, the club head can rely on friction from the screw **8016** or other central fastener to prevent the sole portion **8010** from rotating within the recessed cavity **8014** once the position of the sole portion is set.

The adjustable sole portion **8010** can also be removed and replaced with an adjustable sole portion having shorter or taller wall sections **8041** to further add to the adjustability of the sole angle of the club **8000**. For example, one triangular sole portion **8010** can include three different but relatively shorter pairs of wall sections **8014**, while a second sole portion can include three different but relatively longer pairs of wall sections. In this manner, six different sole angles **2018** can be achieved using the two interchangeable triangular sole portions **8010**. In particular embodiments, a set of a plurality of sole portions **8010** can be provided. Each sole portion **8010** is adapted to be used with a club head and has differently configured wall sections **8041** to achieve any number of different sole angles and/or face angles.

In particular embodiments, the combined mass of the screw **8016** and the adjustable sole portion **8010** is between about 2 and about 11 grams, and desirably between about 4.1 and about 4.9 grams. Furthermore, the recessed cavity **8014** and the projection **8054** can add about 1 to about 10 grams of additional mass to the sole **8022** compared to if the sole had a smooth, 0.6 mm thick, titanium wall in the place of the recessed cavity **8014**. In total, the golf club head **8000** (including the sole portion **8010**) can comprise about 3 to about 21 grams of additional mass compared to if the golf club head had a conventional sole having a smooth, 0.6 mm thick, titanium wall in the place of the recessed cavity **8014**, the adjustable sole portion **8010**, and the screw **8016**.

A club shaft is received within the hosel bore **124** and, in some embodiments, may be aligned with the centerline axis **121**. In some embodiments, a connection assembly is provided that allows the shaft to be easily disconnected from the club head **100**. In still other embodiments, the connection assembly provides the ability for the user to selectively adjust the loft-angle **115** and/or lie-angle **119** of the golf club. For example, in some embodiments, a sleeve is mounted on a lower end portion of the shaft and is configured to be inserted into the hosel bore **124**. The sleeve has an upper portion defining an upper opening that receives the lower end portion of the shaft, and a lower portion having a plurality of longitudinally extending, angularly spaced external splines located below the shaft and adapted to mate with complimentary splines in the hosel opening **124**. The lower portion of the sleeve defines a longitudinally extending, internally threaded opening adapted to receive a screw for securing the shaft assembly to the club head **100** when the sleeve is inserted into the hosel opening **124**. Further detail concerning the shaft connection assembly is provided in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2010/0197424, which is incorporated herein by reference.

For example, FIG. **18** shows an embodiment of a golf club assembly that includes a club head **3050** having a hosel **3052** defining a hosel opening **3054**, which in turn is adapted to receive a hosel insert **200**. The hosel opening **3054** is also adapted to receive a shaft sleeve **3056** mounted on the lower end portion of a shaft (not shown in FIG. **18**) as described in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2010/0197424. The hosel opening **3054** extends from the hosel **3052** through the club head and opens at the sole, or bottom surface, of the club head. Generally, the club head is removably attached to the shaft by the sleeve **3056** (which is mounted to the lower end portion of the shaft) by inserting the sleeve **3056** into the hosel opening **3054** and the hosel insert **200** (which is mounted inside the hosel opening **3054**), and inserting a screw **400** upwardly through an opening in the sole and tightening the screw into a threaded opening of the sleeve, thereby securing the club head to the sleeve **3056**.

The shaft sleeve **3056** has a lower portion **3058** including splines that mate with mating splines of the hosel insert **200**, an intermediate portion **3060** and an upper head portion **3062**. The intermediate portion **3060** and the head portion **3062** define an internal bore **3064** for receiving the tip end portion of the shaft. In the illustrated embodiment, the intermediate portion **3060** of the shaft sleeve has a cylindrical external surface that is concentric with the inner cylindrical surface of the hosel opening **3054**. In this manner, the lower and intermediate portions **3058**, **3060** of the shaft sleeve and the hosel opening **3054** define a longitudinal axis B. The bore **3064** in the shaft sleeve defines a longitudinal axis A to support the shaft along axis A, which is offset from axis B by a predetermined angle **3066** determined by the bore **3064**. As described in more detail in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2010/0197424, inserting the shaft sleeve **3056** at different angular positions relative to the hosel insert **200** is effective to adjust the shaft loft and/or the lie angle.

In the embodiment shown, because the intermediate portion **3060** is concentric with the hosel opening **3054**, the outer surface of the intermediate portion **3060** can contact the adjacent surface of the hosel opening, as depicted in FIG. **18**. This allows easier alignment of the mating features of the assembly during installation of the shaft and further improves the manufacturing process and efficiency. FIGS. **19** and **20** are enlarged views of the shaft sleeve **3056**. As shown, the head portion **3062** of the shaft sleeve (which extends above the hosel **3052**) can be angled relative to the intermediate portion **3060** by the angle **3066** so that the shaft and the head portion **3062** are both aligned along axis A. In alternative embodiments, the head portion **3062** can be aligned along axis B so that it is parallel to the intermediate portion **3060** and the lower portion **3058**.

H. Club Head Volume and Mass

Embodiments of the disclosed golf club heads disclosed herein can have a variety of different volumes. For example, certain embodiments of the disclosed golf club heads are for drivers and have a club head volume of between 250 and 460 cm^3 and a club head mass of between 180 and 210 grams. Other embodiments of the disclosed golf club heads have a volume larger than 460 cm^3 and/or have a mass of greater than 210 g. If such a club head is desired, it can be constructed as described above by enlarging the size of the strike plate and the outer shell of the golf club head.

II. Golf Club Head Crown Construction

Discretionary mass generally refers to the mass of material that can be removed from various structures providing mass. In some cases, the mass is removed for the purpose of reducing overall club mass to allow for higher club head speeds. In other cases, the removed mass can be distributed elsewhere to other structures within the golf club head to achieve desired mass properties, or to allow for the addition of adjustability features which typically add mass to the club head.

Club head walls provide one source of discretionary mass. A reduction in wall thickness reduces the wall mass and provides mass that can be distributed elsewhere. For example, in some current golf club heads, one or more walls of the club head can have a thickness less than approximately 0.7 mm. In some examples, the crown **112** can have a thickness of approximately 0.65 mm throughout at least a majority of the crown. In addition, the skirt **116** can have a similar thickness, whereas the sole **114** can have a greater thickness (e.g., more than approximately 1.0 mm). Thin walls, particularly a thin crown **112**, provide significant discretionary mass. To achieve a thin wall on the club head body **110**, such as a thin crown **112**, club head bodies **110** have been formed from alloys of steel, titanium, aluminum, or other metallic materials. In other examples, the thin walls of the club head body are formed of a non-metallic material, such as a composite material, ceramic material, thermoplastic, or any combination thereof.

Club head durability and manufacturability (e.g., ability to cast thin walls) present limits on the ability of club head designers and club head manufacturers to achieve mass savings from the use of thin wall construction for the crown portion **112** of golf club heads. Several embodiments of club head crown construction described herein are able to achieve such savings while maintaining suitable durability and manufacturability.

Turning to FIGS. **7**A-B, **8**A-B, and **9**, several embodiments of golf club head crown portions are shown. Each of the illustrated embodiments includes a club head crown having a lattice-like structure having thin regions that are surrounded by and strengthened by a web of relatively thicker regions. The resulting crown designs provide mass savings for the club head while maintaining suitable durability and manufacturability.

For example, FIGS. **7**A-B show a golf club head **700** including a hollow body **710** defining a crown portion **712**, a sole portion **714**, a skirt portion **716**, and a ball striking club face **718**. The body **710** further includes a hosel **720**, which defines a hosel bore **724** adapted to receive a golf club shaft. The body **710** further includes a heel portion **726**, a toe portion **728**, a front portion **730**, and a rear portion **732**. The body **710** is preferably formed of a titanium alloy. In other embodiments, the body **710** is formed of other materials, such as a steel alloy, an aluminum alloy, a composite material, or another of the materials described herein.

The crown **712** of the illustrated embodiment includes a forward crown portion **736** and a rearward crown portion **738**. The rearward crown portion **738** is defined by the presence of a lattice-like structure **740** that includes a plurality of thin regions **742** that are surrounded by a web of relatively thicker regions **744**. The forward crown portion **736** extends between the striking face **718** at the front portion **730** of the club head and the rearward crown portion **738** toward the rear portion **732** of the club head. The rearward crown portion **738** extends between the forward crown portion **736** and the rear portion **732** of the club head. In the embodiment shown, each of the forward crown portion **736** and the rearward crown portion **738** extends substantially over the full width of the crown **712** from the heel portion **726** to the toe portion **728**. In alternative embodiments, either or both of the forward crown portion **736** and rearward crown portion **738** may extend over only a portion of the full toe-to-heel width of the crown **712**.

In the embodiment shown in FIGS. **7**A-B, the thin regions **742** of the lattice-like structure **740** each have an elliptical shape defining a major axis "a" and a minor axis "b". In these embodiments, the length of the major axis "a" is from about 12 mm to about 26 mm, such as from about 15 mm to about 23 mm, or about 17 mm to about 21 mm, and the length of the minor axis "b" is from about 3 mm to about 13 mm, such as from about 5 mm to about 11 mm, or from about 6.5 mm to about 9.5 mm. Alternative embodiments include thin regions **742** having larger elliptical shapes, smaller elliptical shapes, or shapes other than elliptical. For example, in some embodiments, the thin regions **742** have a rectangular, oval, or other regular or irregular elongated shape having a length dimension and a width dimension, with the length dimension being from about 12 mm to about 26 mm, such as from about 15 mm to about 23 mm, or about 17 mm to about 21 mm, and the width dimension being from about 3 mm to about 13 mm, such as from about 5 mm to about 11 mm, or from about 6.5 mm to about 9.5 mm.

In the embodiment shown, at least a portion of the thin regions **742**—and preferably all of the thin regions **742**—are arranged such that the major axes "a" of substantially all of the thin regions **742** are generally aligned with or parallel to one another, and the minor axes "b" of substantially all of the thin regions **742** are generally aligned with or parallel to one another. The resulting matrix of thin regions **742** includes thin regions **742** that are aligned along their major axes "a" in a plurality of substantially parallel rows **752**. Within each row **752**, a first end of each thin region **742** is spaced from a second end of an adjacent thin region **742** by a substantially uniform minimum distance "c". Adjacent rows **752** of thin regions include thin regions **742** that are staggered relative to each other such that the minor axis "b" of each thin region **742** is substantially aligned with the thick region **744** extending between a pair of adjacent thin regions in the adjacent rows **752** on either side of the thin region **742**. Moroever, the minor axis "b" of each thin region **742** is substantially nested within the spacing created by a pair of thin regions **742** in adjacent rows **752**, such that the distance between adjacent rows **752** is less than the length of the minor axes "b" of the thin regions **742** included in the adjacent rows **752**. As a result, the thick regions **744** define a non-linear path between adjacent rows **752** of thin regions.

The thin regions **742** in the embodiment shown in FIGS. **7**A-B have a thickness of from about 0.3 mm to about 0.6 mm, such as from about 0.35 mm to about 0.5 mm, or about 0.4 mm. The thick regions **744** in the embodiment shown in FIGS. **7**A-B have a thickness of from about 0.5 mm to about 0.8 mm, such as from about 0.55 mm to about 0.7 mm, or about 0.6 mm. There is a thickness differential between the thin regions and the thick regions in the lattice-like structure. In some embodiments, the thickness differential is at least 0.05 mm, such as at least 0.1 mm, such as at least 0.15 mm. The foregoing thicknesses refer to the components of the golf club head **710** after all manufacturing steps have been taken, including construction (e.g., casting, stamping, welding, brazing, etc.), finishing (e.g., polishing, etc.), and any other steps.

The forward crown portion **736** of the golf club head **710** may be constructed to have a relatively greater thickness than either the thin regions **742** or thick regions **744** of the lattice-like structure **740** in order to provide greater durability to the golf club head. For example, in some embodiments, the forward crown portion **736** has a thickness of from about 0.6 to about 1.0 mm, such as from about 0.7 to about 0.9 mm, or about 0.8 mm. In other embodiments, the forward crown portion **736** has a thickness that is substantially the same as the thickness of the thick regions **744** of the lattice-like structure **740**.

As noted previously, the golf club head **700** may be constructed by techniques such as molding, cold forming, casting, and/or forging. Alternatively, any one or more of the crown **712**, sole **714**, skirt **716**, or ball striking club face **718** can be attached to the other components by known means (e.g., adhesive bonding, welding, and the like). In one embodiment, the crown **712**, sole **714**, skirt **716**, and hosel **720** are formed by a casting process, and the club face **718** is subsequently attached via welding in a separate process. In another embodiment, the crown **712** is formed separately from the other components of the golf club head **700**, such as by stamping, forging, or casting, and the crown **712** is subsequently attached to the other components via welding in a separate process.

In some embodiments, the crown **712** is formed by initially casting the crown having a uniform thickness (i.e., no thin regions **742** or thick regions **744**). Instead, a plurality of protrusions are formed extending on the external surface of the crown **712**. The protrusions define a pattern corresponding with the thin regions **742** ultimately to be included on the internal surface of the crown **712**. These protrusions are then removed from the exterior surface of the crown **712** via a polishing procedure to achieve a smooth external crown surface, leaving the lattice-like structure **740** formed on the interior surface of the crown **712**.

Turning next to FIGS. **8**A-B, an alternative embodiment of a lattice-like structure **840** formed on the interior surface of a golf club head crown portion **812** is shown. A golf club head **800** includes a hollow body **810** defining a crown portion **812**, a sole portion **814**, a skirt portion **816**, and a ball striking club face **818**. The body **810** further includes a hosel **820**, which defines a hosel bore **824** adapted to receive a golf club shaft. The body **810** further includes a heel portion **826**, a toe portion **828**, a front portion **830**, and a rear portion **832**. The body **810** is preferably formed of a titanium alloy. In other embodiments, the body **810** is formed of other materials, such as a steel alloy, an aluminum alloy, a composite material, or another of the materials described herein.

The crown **812** of the illustrated embodiment includes a forward crown portion **836** and a rearward crown portion **838**. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. **8**A-B, the lattice-like structure **840** includes a first plurality of thin regions **842** each having an elliptical shape defining a major axis "a" and a minor axis "b". In these embodiments, the length of the major axis "a" is from about 12 mm to about 26 mm, such as from about 15 mm to about 23 mm, or about 17 mm to about 21 mm, and the length of the minor axis "b" is from about 3 mm to about 13 mm, such as from about 5 mm to about 11 mm, or from about 6.5 mm to about 9.5 mm. Alternative embodiments include thin regions **842** having larger elliptical shapes, smaller elliptical shapes, or shapes other than elliptical.

The embodiment shown in FIGS. **8**A-B also includes a second plurality of thin regions **846** occupying the rearwardmost portion of the crown **812**. Each of the second plurality of thin regions **846** is larger (in surface area) than each of the first plurality of thin regions **842**. In the embodiment shown, each of the second plurality of thin regions **846** is non-elliptical in shape.

In the embodiment shown, at least a portion of the first plurality of thin regions **842**—and preferably all of the first plurality of thin regions **842**—are arranged such that the major axes "a" of substantially all of the thin regions **842** are generally aligned with or parallel to one another, and the minor axes "b" of substantially all of the thin regions **842** are generally aligned with or parallel to one another. The resulting matrix of thin regions **842** includes thin regions **842** that are aligned along their minor axes "b" in a plurality of substantially parallel rows **852**. Within each row **852**, a first side of each thin region **842** is spaced from a second side of an adjacent thin region **842** by a substantially uniform minimum distance "c". Adjacent rows **852** of thin regions include thin regions **842** that are staggered relative to each other such that the major axis "a" of each thin region **842** is substantially aligned with the thick region **844** extending between a pair of adjacent thin regions in the adjacent rows **852** on either side of the thin region **842**. Moroever, the major axis "a" of each thin region **842** is substantially nested within the spacing created by a pair of thin regions **842** in adjacent rows **852**, such that the distance between adjacent rows **852** is less than the length of the major axes "a" of the thin regions **842** included in the adjacent rows **852**. As a result, the thick regions **844** define a non-linear path between adjacent rows **852** of thin regions.

The thin regions **842** and **846** in the embodiment shown in FIGS. **8**A-B have a thickness of from about 0.3 mm to about 0.6 mm, such as from about 0.35 mm to about 0.5 mm, or about 0.4 mm. The thick regions **844** in the embodiment shown in FIGS. **7**A-B have a thickness of from about 0.5 mm to about 0.8 mm, such as from about 0.55 mm to about 0.7 mm, or about 0.6 mm. There is a thickness differential between the thin regions and the thick regions in the lattice-like structure. In some embodiments, the thickness differential is at least 0.05 mm, such as at least 0.1 mm, such as at least 0.15 mm. The foregoing thicknesses refer to the components of the golf club head **810** after all manufacturing steps have been taken, including construction (e.g., casting, stamping, welding, brazing, etc.), finishing (e.g., polishing, etc.), and any other steps.

The forward crown portion **836** of the golf club head **810** may be constructed to have a relatively greater thickness than either the thin regions **842**, **846** or thick regions **844** of the lattice-like structure **840** in order to provide greater durability to the golf club head. For example, in some embodiments, the forward crown portion **836** has a thickness of from about 0.6 to about 1.0 mm, such as from about 0.7 to about 0.9 mm, or about 0.8 mm. In other embodiments, the forward crown portion **836** has a thickness that is substantially the same as the thickness of the thick regions **844** of the lattice-like structure **840**.

In FIG. **9**, another alternative embodiment of a lattice-like structure **940** formed on the interior surface of a golf club head crown portion **912** is shown. In the illustrated embodiment, the lattice-like structure **940** in the rearward crown portion **938** includes a plurality of hexagonally-shaped thin regions **942** that are surrounded by a web of relatively thicker regions **944**.

Depending upon the volume of the golf club head and the materials used in the crown portion, mass savings achieved by the foregoing crown portion designs may be greater than about 2 g, such as greater than about 4 g, or greater than about 6 g. The mass savings are in comparison to a crown having a constant thickness that is substantially the same as the thick regions of the lattice-like structures of the golf club head crown portions described above in relation to FIGS. **7**A-B, **8**A-B, and **9**. In addition, durability testing was conducted by comparing the durability of golf club heads having a constant thickness crown (corresponding to the thickness of the thicker web regions **744**) to golf club heads having a crown with a lattice-like structure such as the embodiments shown in and described with reference to FIGS. **7**A-B above. The inventive golf club heads were found to have durability that was well within an acceptable range for normal use.

Exemplary golf club heads were constructed having a crown portion **712** that included the lattice-like structure shown in FIGS. **7**A-B. The exemplary golf club heads are described by reference to the information included in Table 1:

TABLE 1

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Body material	SS	Ti alloy	Ti alloy
Thin region thickness	0.45 mm	0.5 mm	0.5 mm
Thick region thickness	0.6 mm	0.6 mm	0.6 mm
Thin region surface area (internal crown surface)	3470 mm^2	4208 mm^2	5318 mm^2
Crown surface area (external crown surface)	7081 mm^2	9661 mm^2	11790 mm^2
Ratio of thin region surface area (internal) to crown surface area (external)	0.49	0.44	0.45
Mass savings from thin regions	4.1 gm	1.9 gm	2.4 gm

The "thin region surface area" data presented in Table 1 represents the cumulative surface area of the thin regions **742** on the internal surface of the crown **712** of each of the exemplary golf club heads. The "crown surface area" data represents the total surface area of the external surface of the crown **712**. The "mass savings from thin regions" is the mass of the material that is effectively "removed" from the crown by the provision of the thin regions **742**. The "mass savings" is determined by multiplying the cumulative thin region surface area by the depth of the thin regions to obtain a cumulative thin region "volume," which is then multiplied by the crown material density to obtain a mass savings.

The data in Table 1 shows that the inventive golf club heads described herein include a very large portion of the crown **712** that is occupied by thin regions of a lattice-like structure. More particularly, the inventive golf club heads achieve a ratio of thin region internal surface area to crown external surface area of between 0.40 to 0.55, such as between 0.40 to 0.50, such as between 0.44 to 0.50.

III. Golf Club Head Stiffening Members

Thin walled golf club heads, particularly wood-type golf club heads, can produce an undesirably low frequency sound (e.g., less than about 3,000 Hz) when striking a golf ball. In order to stiffen the club head structure, and to thereby increase the frequency of the sound vibrations produced by the golf club head, one or more stiffening members (e.g., stiffening tubes) may be attached (e.g., via welding) to the interior of the body of the club head.

Described below are several embodiments of golf club heads having one or more stiffening members mounted within an interior cavity of the club head. The one or more stiffening members can be positioned anywhere within the interior cavity. In particular embodiments, the golf club head has an unsupported area, e.g., a pocket, depression, or concave portion, on an external portion of the club head. In specific implementations, the one or more stiffening members connect with and/or extend at least partially along or within the unsupported area to improve properties, such as acoustical characteristics, of the golf club head upon impacting a golf ball.

Referring to FIGS. **10**A-B, and according to one particular embodiment, a wood-type golf club head **1000** is shown. The golf club head **1000** includes a hollow body **1010** defining a crown portion **1012**, a sole portion **1014**, a skirt portion **1016**, and a ball striking club face **1018**. The ball striking club face

1018 can be integrally formed with the body **1010** or attached to the body. The body **1010** further includes a hosel **1020**, which defines a hosel bore **1024** adapted to receive a golf club shaft. The body **1010** further includes a heel portion **1026**, a toe portion **1028**, a front portion **1030**, and a rear portion **1032**.

The crown **1012**, sole **1014**, and skirt **1016** can have any of various shapes and contours. In the specific embodiment shown in FIGS. **10**A-B, the crown **1012** and skirt **1016** have generally rounded, convex profiles. The sole **1014** is generally convex in shape, but includes a plurality of steps **1062** that create localized concave portions within the interior cavity of the club head **1000**. As used herein, a convex portion is defined as a portion of the golf club head body having an external surface that curves, bulges, or otherwise projects generally outward away from the interior portion of the body. Likewise, a concave portion can be defined as a portion of the golf club head body having an external surface that curves, bulges or otherwise projects generally inward toward the interior portion of the body.

In some embodiments, the club head body **1010** is thin-walled. For example, the crown portion **1012** and skirt portion **1016** each may have an average thickness of from about 0.6 mm to about 1.0 mm, such as from about 0.65 mm to about 0.9 mm, or about 0.7 mm to about 0.8 mm. The sole portion **1014** may have an average thickness of from about 0.8 mm to about 1.8 mm, such as from about 1.0 mm to about 1.6 mm, or about 1.0 mm to about 1.4 mm. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. **10**A-B, the club head body **1010** is constructed by forming at least the crown portion **1012**, sole portion **1014**, and club face **1018** as separate components that are welded or brazed together. The crown portion **1012** and sole portion **1014** may be formed by casting, stamping, forging, or other processes known to those skilled in the art. In other, alternative embodiments, the club head body **1010** is constructed by casting at least the crown portion **1012**, sole portion **1014**, and skirt portion **1016** together and subsequently attaching a club striking face **1018** via a welding or adhesive process.

The golf club head **1000** includes one or more stiffening members, such as stiffening tubes **1071**, **1072**, **1073**, **1074**. As used herein, a stiffening member is defined generally as a structure having any of various shapes and sizes projecting or extending from any portion of the golf club head to provide structural support to, improved performance of, and/or acoustical enhancement of the golf club head. Stiffening members can be co-formed with, coupled to, secured to, or attached to, the golf club head. In more specific implementations, a stiffening tube includes a tubular, thin-walled structure which may be solid or may be hollow. In other embodiments, the stiffening tube has a conical, I-beam, or other cross-sectional shape that promotes stiffness. The stiffening tubes may be formed of a metallic alloy (e.g., titanium alloy, aluminum alloy, steel alloy), a polymer-fiber composite material, or other material providing an appropriate combination of stiffness and light weight.

In the illustrated embodiment, the stiffening tubes **1071**, **1072**, **1073**, and **1074** comprise tubes formed of a titanium alloy and having an outer diameter of from about 2 mm to about 7 mm, such as from about 3 mm to about 6 mm, or about 4 mm to about 5 mm. The illustrated stiffening tubes **1071**, **1072**, **1073**, and **1074** have a wall thickness of from about 0.25 mm to about 2.5 mm, such as from about 0.3 mm to about 1.5 mm, or from about 0.4 mm to about 1.0 mm, or about 0.5 mm.

In the embodiment shown in FIGS. **10**A-B, a first stiffening tube **1071** and a second stiffening tube **1072** each extend between and are attached to each of the sole **1014** and the crown **1012**. The first stiffening tube **1071** is attached to the sole **1014** adjacent to a step **1062** formed in the sole. The first stiffening tube **1071** extends generally upward from the sole **1014** at a slight angle away from vertical toward the heel side **1026** of the club head. The second stiffening tube **1072** is attached to the sole **1014** at the step **1062** and toward the heel side **1026** relative to the first stiffening tube **1071**. The second stiffening tube **1072** extends generally upward from the sole **1014** at a larger angle away from vertical toward the heel side **1026** of the golf club head relative to the angle of the first stiffening tube **1071**. A third stiffening tube **1073** is attached at a first end to the sole **1014** and at a second end to the second stiffening tube **1072** near its midpoint. A fourth stiffening tube **1074** is attached at a first end to the step **1062** formed on the sole **1014** and near the toe portion **1028**, and at a second end to the skirt at the toe portion **1028**.

Referring to FIGS. **11**A-B, another embodiment of a wood-type golf club head **1100** is shown. The golf club head **1100** includes a hollow body **1110** defining a crown portion **1112**, a sole portion **1114**, a skirt portion **1116**, and a ball striking club face **1118**. The ball striking club face **1118** can be integrally formed with the body **1110** or attached to the body. The body **1110** further includes a hosel **1120**, which defines a hosel bore **1124** adapted to receive a golf club shaft. The body **1110** further includes a heel portion **1126**, a toe portion **1128**, a front portion **1130**, and a rear portion **1132**.

In the embodiment shown in FIGS. **11**A-B, each of a first stiffening tube **1171**, a second stiffening tube **1172**, a third stiffening tube **1173**, and a fourth stiffening tube **1174** is attached at a first end to the sole **1114** of the golf club head and at a second end to the crown **1112** of the golf club head. The four stiffening tubes **1171**, **1172**, **1173**, and **1174** are generally aligned near the rear portion **1132** of the golf club head extending substantially from the rear heel side **1126** to the rear toe side **1128** of the club head.

The components of the club head **1100** and the stiffening tubes **1171**, **1172**, **1173**, and **1174** of the FIGS. **11**A-B embodiment may be constructed of the same or similar materials and have generally the same or similar sizes and shapes as the corresponding components of the club head **1000** and the stiffening tubes **1071**, **1072**, **1073**, and **1074** of the embodiment shown in FIGS. **10**A-B and described above.

Yet another embodiment of a golf club **1200** head is shown in FIGS. **12**A-B, in which a single stiffening tube **1271** extends between the crown portion **1212** and sole portion **1214** of the club head. The stiffening tube **1271** is preferably formed of a polymer-fiber composite material. In the embodiment shown, the stiffening tube **1271** is attached to the sole **1214** such that a base portion of the stiffening tube **1271** surrounds a port adapted to attach an adjustable sole portion such as those described in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2011/0312347, which was incorporated by reference above.

In some embodiments of the golf club head **1000** shown and described above in relation to FIGS. **10**A-B, the stiffening tubes **1071**, **1072**, **1073**, and **1074** are attached to the crown **1012** and sole **1014** via a welding procedure. For example, in some embodiments in which the crown **1012** and sole **1014** are formed as separate components, the stiffening tubes **1071**, **1072**, **1073**, and **1074** are welded to their respective locations on the sole **1014** component prior to joining the crown **1012** to the sole **1014**. In some of these embodiments, the crown **1012** is provided with a hole at each location in which one of the stiffening tubes **1071**, **1072**, **1073**, and **1074** is to be attached to the crown **1012**. The hole(s) are slightly larger than the cross-sectional dimension of the end(s) of the stiffening tube(s) **1071**, **1072**, **1073**, and **1074**, such that the ends of each of the stiffening tubes **1071**, **1072**, **1073**, and **1074** extend a short distance through the respective hole in the crown **1012** when the crown **1012** is joined to the sole **1014**, such as via welding or brazing. After the crown **1012** is attached to the sole **1014** and/or other portions of the club head body **1010**, the ends of each of the stiffening tubes **1071**, **1072**, **1073**, and **1074** are welded to the crown **1012** from the exterior of the club head body **1010**. After welding, the club head body **1010** is polished and otherwise finished to remove any remnants of the welding process and to render the exterior surface of the crown **1012** smooth.

In other embodiments, such as the golf club head **1100** illustrated in FIGS. **11**A-B and the golf club head **1200** illustrated in FIGS. **12**A-B, one or both ends of each of the stiffening tubes **1171**, **1172**, **1173**, **1174**, and/or **1271** are attached to the crown **1112**, **1212** and/or the sole **1114**, **1214** via one or more attachment brackets **1176**, **1276**. The attachment brackets **1176**, **1276** may be attached to the crown **1112**, **1212** and/or the sole **1114**, **1214** via welding, adhesive, or other process. In some embodiments, the brackets **1176**, **1276** include a slot by which a stiffening tube **1171**, **1172**, **1173**, **1174**, and/or **1271** may slide into engagement with the bracket **1176**, **1276**.

In some of the embodiments shown in FIGS. **10**A-B, **11**A-B, and **12**A-B, the stiffening tubes are attached to the sole, crown, or other portion of the golf club head (or to another stiffening tube) such that the stiffening tubes are not under a compression or tension load when the golf club head is not in use. In other words, the stiffening tubes have supporting dimensions (e.g., lengths) that are the same as the corresponding dimensions of the interior of the club head body to which the stiffening tubes are attached so that those dimensions would not substantially change (when the golf club head is not in use) even if the supporting tubes were removed from the structure.

The stiffening tubes of the present disclosure are lightweight and compact. By way of example only, in specific implementations, the combined mass of the stiffening tubes of the golf club head embodiments shown and described above in relation to FIGS. **10**A-B and **11**A-B can be approximately 8 grams or less, such as 6 grams or less. Of course, in other implementations, the particular dimensions of the ribs may vary, and optimal dimensions and combined mass may be different for different head designs.

Preferably, the overall frequency of the golf club head, i.e., the average of the first mode frequencies of the crown, sole and skirt portions of the golf club head, generated upon impact with a golf ball is greater than 3,000 Hz. Frequencies above 3,000 Hz provide a user of the golf club with an enhanced feel and satisfactory auditory feedback. However, a golf club head having a larger volume and/or having relatively thin walls can reduce the first mode vibration frequencies to undesirable levels. The addition of the stiffening tubes described herein can significantly increase the first mode vibration frequencies, thus allowing the first mode frequencies to approach a more desirable level and improving the feel of the golf club to a user.

For example, golf club head designs were modeled using commercially available computer aided modeling and meshing software, such as Pro/Engineer by Parametric Technology Corporation for modeling and Hypermesh by Altair Engineering for meshing. The golf club head designs were analyzed using finite element analysis (FEA) software, such as the finite element analysis features available with many commercially available computer aided design and modeling software programs, or stand-alone FEA software, such as the ABAQUS software suite by ABAQUS, Inc.

The golf club head design was made of titanium and shaped similar to the head shown in FIGS. **11**A-B, except that several iterations were run in which the golf club head had different combinations of the stiffening tubes **1171**, **1172**, **1173**, and **1174** present or absent. Referring to Table 2 below, the predicted first or normal mode frequency of the golf club head, i.e., the frequency at which the head will oscillate when the golf club head impacts a golf ball, was obtained using FEA software for the various golf club head designs and is shown. The club head mass for each of the designs is also listed in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Description	First Mode	Mass
No stiffening tubes	2247 Hz	181.1 g
Stiffening tube 1172 only	2801 Hz	183.2 g
Stiffening tubes 1172 and 1173	2977 Hz	184.2 g
Stiffening tubes 1171 and 1173	2896 Hz	183.9 g
Stiffening tubes 1173 and 1174	2723 Hz	184.5 g
Stiffening tubes 1171 and 1172	2816 Hz	183.8 g
Stiffening tubes 1172 and 1174	3027 Hz	184.4 g
Stiffening tubes 1171 and 1174	2573 Hz	184.1 g
Stiffening tubes 1171, 1172, and 1173	3020 Hz	184.7 g
Stiffening tubes 1171, 1173, and 1174	3315 Hz	185.1 g
Stiffening tubes 1171, 1172, 1173, and 1174	3435 Hz	185.9 g

As shown in Table 2, the predicted first mode frequency of the golf club head without any stiffening tubes is well below the preferred lower limit of 3,000 Hz. By adding stiffening tubes in the manner shown, the predicted first mode frequency of the golf club head can be increased into a more desirable frequency range. Based on the results of the analysis, the impact of having stiffening tubes attached to the interior surfaces of a golf club head on the first mode frequency is quite significant.

Having illustrated and described the principles of the illustrated embodiments, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that the embodiments can be modified in arrangement and detail without departing from such principles. In view of the many possible embodiments to which the principles of the disclosed invention may be applied, it should be recognized that the illustrated embodiments are only preferred examples of the invention and should not be taken as limiting the scope of the invention.

We claim:

1. A golf club head comprising:

a body having a crown, a sole, a heel, a toe, and a striking face, with the body defining an interior cavity;

wherein the crown includes an internal surface defining an internal crown surface area and an external surface defining an external crown surface area, the crown having a thickness comprising a minimum distance between the internal surface and the external surface at a given location on the crown;

wherein the crown internal surface includes a plurality of thin regions having a thickness of less than 0.60 mm separated by a plurality of thick regions having a thickness of at least 0.60 mm, with the plurality of thick regions and the plurality of thin regions having a thickness differential of at least 0.05 mm;

wherein each thin region defines a thin region surface area on the internal surface of the crown, and wherein a sum of all of the thin region surface areas comprises the total thin region surface area; and

wherein a ratio of the total thin region surface area to the external crown surface area is between 0.40 and 0.55, wherein at least come of the thin regions comprise an elongated shape having a length between about 12 mm and 26 and a width between about 3 mm and about 13 mm.

2. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein at least some of the thin regions comprise an elliptical shape having a length between about 12 mm and 26 mm and a width between about 3mm and about 13 mm.

3. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the ratio of the total thin region surface area to the external crown surface area is between 0.40 and 0.50.

4. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the ratio of the total thin region surface area to the external crown surface area is between 0.44 and 0.50.

5. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the crown comprises a titanium alloy.

6. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the crown comprises stainless steel.

7. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the thin regions are arranged in a plurality of rows on the crown internal surface, and wherein the plurality of thick regions define non-linear paths between adjacent rows of thin regions.

8. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the plurality of thin regions and the plurality of thick regions define a thickness differential of at least 0.10 mm.

9. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the plurality of thin regions and the plurality of thick regions define a thickness differential of at least 0.15 mm.

10. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the thin regions have a thickness of from about 0.3 mm to about 0.6 mm.

11. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the thin regions have a thickness of from about 0.35 mm to about 0.5 mm.

12. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the thick regions have a thickness of from about 0.6 mm to about 0.8 mm.

13. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the crown includes a forward crown portion and a rearward crown portion, with the forward crown portion being located adjacent the striking face and the rearward crown portion being located between the forward crown portion and a rear of the body;

wherein the plurality of thin regions are located only on the rearward crown portion; and

wherein the forward crown portion has a thickness of from about 0.6 mm to about 1.0 mm.

14. The golf club head of claim **13**, wherein the forward crown portion has a thickness of from about 0.7 mm to about 0.9 mm.

15. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the plurality of thin regions provides a mass savings of at least 2 gm.

16. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the plurality of thin regions provides a mass savings of at least 4 gm.

17. The golf club head of claim **1**, wherein the plurality of thin regions provides a mass savings of at least 6 gm.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 9,079,078 B2
APPLICATION NO. : 13/730039
DATED : July 14, 2015
INVENTOR(S) : Greensmith et al.

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

In the Claims:

Column 25, line 1, "come" should read -- some --.

Signed and Sealed this
Twenty-second Day of March, 2016

Michelle K. Lee

Michelle K. Lee
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office